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ANCIENT ENGLEISH  
METRICAL ROMANCEËS,

SELECTED AND PUBLISH'D

BY JOSEPH RITSON.

VOL. I.

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Quæ priscis memorata Catonibus atque Cethegis  
Nunc situs informis premit ac deferta vetustas.

HORATIUS.

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LONDON:

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE nature, importance, and utility of such a publication as the present have been display'd to so much advantage by a writeër of the highest eminence for his acquaintance with the subject, and for his ingenuity and taste, that it would be almost an act of injustice to the undertaking not to make use of such a powerful and elegant recommendation, to which no attempt of the present editour could possibly be equal.

“ As many of these METRICAL HISTORIES and ROMANCES contain a considerable portion of poetic merit, and throw great light on the manners and opinions of former times, it were to be wished that some of the best of them were rescued from oblivion. A judicious collection of them, accurately published, with proper illustrations, would be an important accession to our stock of ancient English literature. Many of them exhibit no mean attempts at epic poetry, and though full of the

exploded fictions of chivalry, frequently display great and inventive powers in the bards who composed them. They are at least generally equal to any other poetry of the same age. They cannot indeed be put in competition with the nervous productions of so universal and commanding a genius as Chaucer; but they have a simplicity that makes them be read with less interruption, and be more easily understood: and they are far more spirited and entertaining than the tedious allegories of Gower, or the dull and prolix legends of Lydgate: yet, while so much stress is laid upon the writings of these last, by such as treat of English poetry, the old metrical romances, though far more popular in their time, are hardly known to exist....Should the public encourage the revival of some of those ancient epic songs of chivalry, they would frequently see the rich ore of an Ariosto or Tasso, though buried, it may be, among the rubbish and dross of barbarous times.

“ Such a publication would answer many important uses: it would throw new light on the rise and progress of English poetry, the history of which can be but imperfectly understood, if these are neglected; it would also serve to illustrate innumerable



passages in our ancient classic poets, which, without their help, must be for ever obscure."

The publication so much desire'd, and so eloquently recommended by this learned and ingenious writeër, has been at length undertakeën; and to what he has say'd in its favour nothing remains to be aded but some little information as to the mode in which it makes its appearance.

This collection, then, of **ANCIENT ENGLEISH METRICAL ROMANCEES** consists of such pieceës as, from a pretty general acquaintance, have been selected for the best. Every article is derive'd from some ancient manuscript, or old printed copy, of the authenticity of which the reader has all possible satisfaction; and is printed with an accuracy, and adherence to the original, of which the publick has had very few examples. The utmost care hath been observe'd in the **GLOSSARY**, and every necessary or useful information (to the best of the editours judgement) is giveën in the **NOTES**.

Brought to an end with much industry and more attention, in a continue'd state of ill-health, and low spirits, the editour abandons it to general censure, with cold indifference, expecting little favour, and less profit; but certain, at any rate, to be insulted

by the malignant and calumnious personalities of a base and prostitute gang of lurking asfafsins, who stab in the dark, and whose poison'd daggers he has allready experience'd.

DISSERTATION  
ON  
ROMANCE AND MINSTRELSY.

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§ 1. ORIGIN OF ROMANCE.

IF what is call'd a metrical romance, in its most extensive acceptation, be properly defin'd a fabulous narrative, or fictitious recital, in verse, more or less marvelous or probable, it may be fairly concluded that this species of composition was known, at a very early period, to the Greeks, and, in process of time, adopted from them by the Romans. The *Iliad* of Homer, in short, the *Odyssey*, ascribe'd to the same poet,\* the *Argonauticks* of

\* It seems highly probable that both these poems were not written by the same person. In the latter, the goddess Venus is the wife of Vulcan, who surprisess her in the act of adultery with Mars (B. 8):

“ Mean time the bard, alternate to the strings,  
The loves of *Mars* and *Cytherea* sings.”

In the former, they have no sort of connection, Venus has no husband, and Vulcan has a different wife (B. 13):

“ *Charis*, his spouse, a grace divinely fair,  
With purple fillets round her braided hair.”

Such an inconsistency, it is believ'd, cannot be easily detected in any other poet. It has been, moreover, a very generally receive'd opinion, that he was, likewise, the authour of a mock-epick, intitle'd *Batrachomyomachia*, or *The battle of the frogs and mice*. It is by no means probable that the oldest manuscript copies of Homers poems should exhibit his name

Onomacritus, or Orpheus of Crotona, those likewise of Apollonius Rhodius,\* and the *Hero and Leander* of Musæus, among the former, and the *Æneid* of Virgil, the *Metamorphosis* of Ovid,† the *Argonauticks* of Valerius Flaccus, and the *Thebaid* of Statius,‡

in the title, or colophon; and, as it never occurs in the book, it must have been retain'd, if at all, by tradition. It should be remember'd, at the same time, that he is mention'd by no writer til between 4 and 5,00 years after his death.

\* This poem, according to Quadrio, was treated by many as a Grecian romance of chivalry. (*Storia d'ogni poesia*, IV, 453.) It is the original of the northern romances of *Jason and Medea*. “*Il faut remarquer*,” observes Huet, “*pour l'honneur des troubadours, qu' Homere l'a esté devant eux*.” *De l'origine des romans*, 1678, P. 123.

Virgil makes Dido to reign at Carthage in the time of Æneas, though in reality she did not arrive in Africa til three hundred years after the suppos'd destruction of Troy. Such a violent anachronism is onely admisible in a romance.

† Chaucer, in his *Dreme*, to pass the night away, rather than play at Chefs, calls for a *romaunce*, in which “were writtin fables of quenis livis, and of kings, and many other thingis smale.” This proves to be Ovid. See v. 52, &c. or Warton's *History* of English poetry, I, 388.

‡ The ingenious doctor, or bishop Percy, who has great weight in matters of this sort, says of *Lybeaus disconus*, of which he has giveen an excellent analysis, “If an epic poem may be defined “A fable related by a poet, to excite admiration, and inspire virtue, by representing the action of some one hero, favoured by heaven, who executes a great design, in spite of all the obstacles that oppose him;” i know not why we should withhold the name of EPIC POEM from the piece which i am about to analyse [or that of ROMANCE to the epic poem above define'd:]” *Reliques of ancient English poetry*, III, xxviii; citing “*Discours sur la poésie epique*” prefix'd to *Telemachus*.”

among the latter, however distinguish'd by superior art and merit, or the more illustrious appellation of epick poems, are, in reality, as perfect metrical romancees as the storys of king Arthur and Charlemagne; all those venerable monuments of ancient genius being no less the work of imagination and invention than the more modern effusions, upon similar subjects, of the French and Norman *trouveurs*, or Italian *romanzieri*. The Trojan story is no more fabulous and unfounded in the oldest French romance on that subject, in point of historical fact, than it is in the Iliad or Æneid; nor is the siege of Troy, as relateed by Homer, at all more certain, or more credible, than that of Albracca, as aserted by Boiardo; nor are Hector and Achilles of more identity than Rowland and Oliver. It seems, therefore, a very hasty asertion of the historian of Engleish poetry, that the "peculiar and arbitrary species of fiction, which we commonly call romance, was entirely unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome".\* Was this voluminous authour unacquainted with the romancees of Antonius Diogenes, of which Photius has giveen an account, the love-tales of Longus, Heliodorus, and Xenophon of Ephesus. He himself, even, cites an old Engleish version of the *Clitophon and Leucippe* of Achilles Tatius, (though, actually in plain prose) "as a POETICAL NOVEL of GREECE"; and, at any rate, a novel is a species

\* *History of E. poetry*, I, fig. 2.

of romance. The Milesian tales of Aristides, likewise, so famous in their day, though none of them now remain, must have been some kind of romanceës, whether in prose or verse. A copy of these tales, or, at least, the Latin version of Sisenna, according to Plutarch, was, after the defeat of Crassus, in Parthia, found in the baggage of Roscius, a Roman officer.

Homer, in fact, is much more extravagant and hyperbolical, or sublime, if it must be so, than Ariosto himself, the very prince of romance. His poetical machinery is compos'd of the Grecian deities (worship'd and ador'd by himself and his countrymen), who take a decid'd part on each side, fight, and are wounded or victorious, like the ordinary mortals with whom they engage. Many of his heroes, at the same time, are the offspring of these identical and illusory divinities; as Helen, for instance, the fatal authouress of this sanguinary ten years war, was the daughter of Jupiter, the supreme god of the Greeks, by Leda, whose embraceës he experience'd in the form of a swan; the issue, of course, was an egg, out of which proceeded this female fire-brand; who must, however, have been pretty far advance'd in years, long before her elopement with the juvenile and gallant Paris, having been ravish'd by Theseus forty years before, and being now, of course, like our queen Elizabeth, a matchless beauty in her grand climact'rick. The two demi gods, Castor and Pollux, her bretheren,



came into the world in the same miraculous way. Achilles, likewise, the celebrated champion of the Greeks, was the son of Thetis, a sea-godess; as Æneas, the pretended founder of the Roman empire, was of Venus, the godess of love; and all these fancies of a poetical imagination are to be firmly believe'd, though nothing more than mere romance. With respect to the famous city of Troy, which stood so long a siege, and was lay'd "at last in ashes," there is not the slightest evidence that such a place even existed, in or before, that is, the æra fix'd upon by this immortal rhapsodist; and the antagonists of mister Bryant, the onely modern author, who has attempted to demolish this magnificent but ideal fabrick,\* have reason'd like the advocates of Geoffrey of Monmouth, by arguments and authorities, that is, deduce'd from Homer himself, or writers who live'd many centurys after him. Herodotus, however, the father of Grecian history, who flourish'd (according to his own account) about four hundred years after Homer, whose works he must needs have been familiar with, since he wrote his life, and cites them in his history, is a decisive evidence that no such expedition ever took place.

\* The existence of the Trojan war was dispute'd by Dio Chrysostom more than a thousand years ago. Even Homer himself has been prove'd, by his last editour, the learned Wolf, incapable to write or read; nor does either writing or reading appear, from his elaborate *Prolegomena*, to have been known til many centurys after the æra of Homer (See p. 49, 57, 77, 88, 179).

Being a profess'd antiquary, he must necessarily, from his assiduous researches into the remoteest periods of Grecian history, or, at least, from the traditions which would be naturally preserve'd, of so important, and celebrate'd, an event, in the very country from which these heroick kings and princeës, with their ships and forceës, had proceeded, if such an expedition had taken place. He appears, on the contrary, to have known or hear'd, at least amongst his own countrymen, nothing at all of the matter, except what he himself, and every one else, had read in Homer, and certain spurious Cyprian verses, falsely ascribe'd to that same illustrious bard: for, going into Ægypt, peradventure, for this express purpose, "When enquireing," says he, "whether the Greeks have relate'd falsehoods concerning the deeds perform'd at Ilium, or not, the priests answer'd me thus: that they knew, from Menelaus himself, that Helen being carry'd off, great forceës of the Greeks had come to the assistance of Menelaus into Teucris: which, having landed, and fortify'd a place, sent messengers to Ilium, with whom, also, Menelaus went himself; that these, after they had enter'd the walls, not only demanded Helen, and the treasures which Alexander, by robbery had carry'd away, but, also, require'd the atonements of injuries: that the Teucrians, however, both then, and afterward, either sworn or unsworn, had relate'd the same things, that they themselves had neither Helen, nor the

treasures whereof they were accuse'd ; but that all those things were in Ægypt ; that neither could they suffer themselves to be arraign'd with justice of those goods which Proteus the king of Ægypt withheld ; that the Greeks, thinking themselves derideëd, had so besiege'd Ilium, til, at length, they took it by storm ; that, the city being takeën, when Helen did not appear, and they hear'd the same defence as before, at last, faith being giveën to the former words, the Greeks sent Menelaus himself to Proteus. When this man arrive'd in Ægypt, and ascended Memphis in a ship, the truth of the matter being explain'd, and himself welcome'd with hospitality, in a most honorable manner, he receive'd Helen ful of injurys, and all his treasures :"\* and such was the fable of the Ægyptian priests, which the inquisitive historian appears to have swallow'd as perfectly rational, though in diametrical opposition to the infallible Homer.

The *Odyssey*, whether by that same poet or not, is devoid of truth from begining to end, and abounds with adventures as hyperbolical or extravagant as those of any French romance. The historian of Engleish poetry justly observes, that " all the romances have an enchantress, who detains the knight from his quest, by objects of pleasure ; and who is nothing more than the *Calypso* of Homer, and the *Armida* of Tasso [or the *Alcina* of Ariosto]."

Huet, who imagin'd it of the essence of a romance to be in prose, professes not to treat of those in verse, much less, of epick poems; which, beside that they are in verse, have, moreover, different essentials, which distinguish them from romanceës, though otherwise, he admits, there is a very great relation; and, following the maxim of Aristotle (who teaches that a poet is more a poet by the fictions he invents than by the verse he composes) makeërs of romanceës may be rank'd among the poets.

After Statius, there is no metrical-romance-writeër, or epick poet, in the Latin tongue, known to have existed before Joseph of Exeter, call'd by some *Cornelius Nepos*, who wrote, in six books, *Of the Trojan war*, and, in one book, *The war of Antioch*; and flourish'd, according to Bale, about the year 1210; or Philip Gualtier, a Frenchman, authour of *The Alexandrid*, or actions of Alexander the great, about the same period: all three in imitation of Lucan, or Statius.

It appears, however, difficult to demonstrate that the comparatively modern romanceës of the French owe their immediate origin to the epick poetry, or fabulous tales, of the Greeks or Romans, but it may be fairly admitted, as by no means improbable, that these remains of ancient literature had some degree of influence; though the connection is too remote and obscure to admit of elucidation.

The Latin language continu'd, after the dissolu-

tion of the Roman empire, to be in use with the common people of France and Italy; but, ceasing, it may be, to be study'd grammatically, and becoming gradually intermix'd with the barbarous jargons of the different northern nations which had subjugate'd, or expel'd the Romans, and occupy'd their seats, til, about the ninth century, an entirely new speech or dialect gain'd a complete ascendancy in both. At one period, it is say'd, there were not less than three distinct languageës spokeën in France: the old Celtick or Gaulish, that is, the Latin, and this new dialect call'd the *Roman* or *Romance*, a mixture, it would seem, of Latin, Frankish, and Celtick, the last of which, it is suppose'd, was speedily exterminate'd.\* The term *Roman* owe'd, in fact, to have been the distinguishing characteristic of the Latin tongue, which the French appear to have understood at the begining of the seventh century;† but this was, by no means, the case, as wil appear from a pasage quote'd by Fauchet from the *roman d'Alexandre*, compose'd, he says, by persons liveing in the year 1150:

“ *La verté de l'histoir' si com' li rois la fit,  
Un clers de Chasteaudun, Lambert li Cors l'escrit,  
Qui de Latin la trest, et en Roman la mit.*”

\* See a good account of the conversion, or perversion, of the Latin tongue into Italian, from authentick documents, in Muratoris *Antiquitates Italiae*, II, 990.

† See *Le Beufs Recherches*, &c. *Memoires de l'aca. des inscrip.* xvii, 712.



✓ It is plain, therefore, that *Latin* and *Roman* were different languageës: since this poet drew a history out of the latter to put it into the former. It is true, he observes, that these verseës are made more than three hundred years after Charlemagne;\* and, although it were not so, that one understood five hundred years ago, that to speak the rustick *Roman* was the common language of the inhabitants on this side of the Meuse, it onely behoves to read that which Nitard hath written in his history of the discord of the children of the emperour Lewis the debonair, hapening in the year 841. For, making mention of Lewis king of Germany, and of Charles the bald, king of Western France (that is to say, between the Meuse and the Loire), he says, that the two kings wiling to asfure those who had follow'd them, that this alliance should be perpetual, they spoke each to the people of his *pair* (the word of which Nitard makes use), to wit, Lewis king of Germany to the Western French, who follow'd Charles, in the *Roman* tongue, (that is to say, the *rustick*,) and Charles, to those of Lewis, who were Aufrasians, Germans, Saxons, and other inhabitants beyond the Rhine, in the

\* It is say'd of this emperour, by Eginhart, his chaplain or secretery, that "he wrote down and committed to memory the barbarous and most ancient songs, in which the acts and wars of the old kings were sung." (C. 29.) These, in all likelyhood, were in the Theotisc or Teutonic language, mention'd in the text. In Schilters *Theaurus* are two very ancient poems in this dialect, on the expeditions of that emperour.



*Teutonick* tongue. The words of the oath which Lewis took, in the *Roman* tongue, were such as, say'th our authour, i have takeën from a book writen more than five hundred years ago: "*Pro don amur & pro christian poblo & nostro commun salvament, dist di en avant in quant deus savir & potir me dunat, si salvarai eo cest meon fradre Karlo, & in adjudha & in cadhuna cosa, si cum hom per dreit son fradre salvar dist, ino quid il imi altre si faret, et ab Ludher nul plaid nunquam prindrai, qui meon vol cist meon fradre Karle in damno sit.*"\* The people of Westria answer'd in the same language: *Si Lodhwigs sacrament que son fradre Karlo jurat conservat & Karlus, meos fendra, de suo part non los tanit: si io returnar non lint pois in ne io, ne neuls, cui eo returnar nit pois in nulla adjudha contra Lodhuwig nun li iter.*† He, elsewhere, says, (from a very ancient copy of Nitard,‡ extant in the

\* (Corrected from Bouquet, VII, 36.) In Engleish thus: "For the love of god and of the Christian people, and for our common safety. From this day foreward, in so much as god wil give me knowlege and power, i shal save my brother Charles, and i wil aid him in every thing, as a man by right owes to serve his brothers, in this that he wil do as much of it for me; and i shal not make with Lothair any treaty with my wil, which may be prejudicial to my brother Charles."

† (Corrected as above.) In Engleish thus: "If Lewis keep the oath which he has sworn to his brother Charles, and Charles, my lord, on his part, do not hold it; if i cannot divert him from it, nor myself or others can divert him from it, we shal not go with any aid against Lewis."

‡ *De la langue & poësie Françoisse*, C. 4. La Combe only

library of Magloire at Paris,) that Lewis, as the elder, swore first in the *Roman* tongue; as before. This oath being made, Charles say'd the same words in Teutonic or Theotisc: “ *In godes minna, ind durhtes Xristianes folches ind unser bedhero gehalt-nisfi fonthesemo dage frammordes, so fram so mir got gewizeindi mahd furgibit, so hald ih tesan minanbruodher so so man mit rehtu finan bruodher scal, inthi ut hazer mig so so maduo, māduo, indi mit Lutherem inno theinnithing ne gegango zhe minan willon imo cé scadhen werhen.*” The most learned Germans of our authours day thought that this language held more of the Frison than of any other dialect of Germany. After this the people swore each in his own tongue, to wit, those of Charles, these words “ *Si Luduigs, &c.* as before; and the people of king Lewis these words in Theotisc, or Teutonic: “ *Oba Karl then eid, then er sinemo bruodher Ludhuwig gesfuor geleistit, inde Ludhuwig min herro then er imo gesfuor forbrichit, ob ih ina nes arwenden nemag, noh ih, noh thero thein his inewenden mag, imo ce follusti widhar Karle ne wirdhit.*” Our authour himself found that the *Roman* language approach'd to the *Provençal*, or *Lyonnois*, more than to his own, on the north of the Loire.\*

The present Swiss have the bible *en Rumanisch*, that is, in their vulgar tongue, and use the same

gives the oath of Lewis, and the answers; and La Ravalliere but one of the answers.

\* *Des antiquités Françoises*, 1610, 4to. B. 9, C. 6, fo. 330, 331. (Corrected from Bouquet, VII, 35, &c.)

expression for that of the French.\* The Spaniards still call their native language *romancé Castellano*; and *hablar en romancé*, is to speak Spanish.

In the library of Berne is a MS. of the 13th or 14th century (Num. 646) intitled “*Li livre du tresor lequel maistre Brunes...translata de Latin en Romans.*”†

In about a couple of centuries, afterward, the word *Roman* was use'd by the French, not onely as designative of their language, but, also, of any book written therein; though, in process of time, it was confin'd to books of chivalry; ‡ as *romance* was to a ballad, or narrative song. “*Toutesfois,*” says the old prose *roman de Paris et Vienne*, “*le frere ne pensoit pas parler Romain*” (i. e. François). In Spanish, to this day, *romancé* means both the vernacular language and a vulgar ballad; while *romanzi*, in Italian, is appropriated solely to books of chivalry in rime.

An ancient topographer (suppos'd to be Girald Barry, bishop of St. Davids, commonly call'd *Giraldus Cambrensis*) even use's the word *Romané* for the English, or vulgar language of his own time: “*ab illa aquâ optima,*” says he, “*quæ Scotticè [sub. Hibernicè] vocata est Froth, Britannicè*

\* *Des antiquités Françaises*, 1610, 4to. B. 9, C. 6, fo. 34.

† *Sinners Catalogue*, III, 20.

‡ “All is calde geste Inglis,  
That on this language spoken is,  
Frankis spech is cald *romance*  
So fais clerkes and men of France.”

Robert of Brunne. P. cvi.

[*Wallicè*, sci.] Werid, ROMANE [i. e. *Anglicè*] *vero* Scotte-wattre, i. *aqua Scottorum*.\* He means the firth of Forth.

The learned Tyrwhitt, with obvious plausibility, thinks it evident that poets in the vulgar languageës, who first appear'd about the ninth century, borrow'd their rimes from the hymns of St. Ambrose and St. Damafus, as early as the fourth, and from the Christian poets, Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the fifth and fixth, and the other Latin poetry of that age. There is, even, a Latin song in rime extant in print, which was made upon a great victory, obtain'd by king Clothair the second, over the Saxons, in the year 622, and serves to support the above opinion, that the vulgar poets of that period had allready adopted the art of rimeing from the hymns of the church. It proves, allso, that the Latin tongue was still in use, even among the common soldiers, in the seventh century. The following stanza is offer'd as a specimen :

*“ De Clotario est canere rege Francorum,  
Qui ixit pugnare cum gente Saxonum,  
Quam graviter provenisset misfis Saxonum,  
Si non fuisset inclitus Faro de gente Burgundionum.”†*

\* Inneses *Critical essay*, 770.

† L'Evêque de la Ravilliere, *Poësies du roy de Navarre*, I, 193.

“ 'Tis time to sing of Clothair, king of French,  
With Saxon people he who went to fight,  
Their mesfengers he grievously had treated,  
Had it not been for Pharaoh, the Burgundian.”

Le Beuf has publish'd another, upon the battle of Fontenay, in 841. (See *Divers écrits*, I, 165.)

There is, likewise, an elegy, compose'd by Gotescale, in his exile, which has both rime, and poetry :

“ *Ut quid jubes, pufiole,  
Quare mandas, filiole,  
Carmen dulce me cantare,  
Cum fim longè exul valde,  
Intra mare,  
O cur jubes canere?*”

Many of the church-hymns, about that period, are in the same metre. The most numerous, however, and decisive, proofs are to be found in the *Antiquitates Italiæ* of Muratori.\*

There is an instance, in Ushers *Primordia*, of a couplet in Irish rime, made by St. Patrick in the fifth century.†

Different authours have attributeed the origin of romance, to three sourceës, altogether remote from each other : 1. The Arabians ; 2. The Scandinavians ; 3. The Provençals. It appears, from an observation of the historian of Engleish poetry, “ to have been imported into Europe by a people whose modes of thinking, and habits of invention, are not natural to that country...It is generally suppose'd to have been borrow'd from the Arabians...It is an establish'd maxim,” he proceeds, of modern criticism,\* that the fictions of Arabian imagination

\* *Disfertatio* XL.

† P. 450.

‡ That, he means, of Warburton, and the Warburtonian

were communicate'd to the western world by means of the crusades...But it is evident that these fancies were introduce'd at a much earlier period: The Saracens, or Arabians, having enter'd Spain about the beginning of the eighth century.\* It is obvious to conclude, he continues, that at the same time, they disseminate'd those extravagant inventions which were so peculiar to their romantick and creative genius...The ideal tales of these eastern invadeers, recommended by a brilliancy of description, a variety of imagery, and an exuberance of invention, were eagerly caught up and universally diffused. From Spain, he asserts, they soon pass'd into France and Italy†...It is for this reason, he pretends, the elder Spanish romancees have professedly more Arabian allusions than any other.‡ There is, in fact, not one single French romance, now extant, and but one, mention'd by any ancient writer, which existed before the first crusade, under Godfrey, earl of Bologne, afterward king of Jerusalem, in 1097: neither is any thing known concerning the literature of the Moors who came over from Barbary, and settle'd in Spain, in 711; nor is it at all probable, or capable of proof, that even the Spaniards, much less any of the other nations of Europe, had an opportunity of adopting any literary information, or did so, in fact, from a people, with

school, of which the distinguishing characteristicks are want of knowledge, extreme confidence, and habitual mendacity.

\* I, fig. a.

† I, a, b.

‡ I, iii.



whom they had no connection, but as enemys, whose language they never understood, and whose manners they detested; or would even have condescended, or permitted themselves, to make such an adoption, from a set of infidel barbarians, who had invade'd, ravage'd, and possess'd themselves of some of the best and richest provincees of Spain; with whom they had continual wars, til they at last drove them out of the country; whom, in fact, they allways avoided, abhor'd, and despise'd. There is, doubtless, a prodigious number of Arabick poems in the library of the Escorial, which has been plunder'd from the Moors, but which no Spanish poet ever made use of, or, in short, had ever access to. It was not in the historians power to cite one single old Spanish romance that has the slightest Arabian allusion, except, indeed, that of the *Cid Ruy Dias*, where, as in those of *Charlemagne*, the Moors or Saracens are introduce'd as enemys, and in two modern books, the "*Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo*," printed in 1592, and the *Historia de los reynos de los Zegries y Abençerrages*," printed at Seville in 1598, and, under the title of "*Historia de las guerras civiles de Granada*," at Paris, in 1600; both falsely pretended to have been translate'd from the Arabick, and ridicule'd, on that account, by Cervantes, who makes use of the same pretence in his *Quirote*. The Spaniards are so far from having any ancient *historias de cavallerias*, which we call romancees, that they have not a single ballad

(which they call *romancé*) upon the subject of the Moors, except, it may be, a few compos'd after, or about, the time of their expulsion, and extant in the *Romancero general*, or other compilations of the like kind. With respect to the oriental literature for which we are indebted to the crusades, beside the *Clericalis disciplina* of Peter Alfonsus, a converted Jew, baptise'd in 1106\*, in which are many eastern tales, there is but one single French romance, in rime or prose, of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, which appears to have been taken from an Arabian or oriental source; it is that of *Cleomedes*, by king Adenes (a minstrel-monarch, or herald,) after "The story of the enchanted horse," in *The thousand and one nights*. As to the rest, this eloquent and flowery historian, whose duty it was to ascertain truth from the evidence of facts and ancient documents, and not to indulge his imagination in reverie and romance, without the least support, or even colour, of veracity or probability, has not the slightest authority for this visionary system, but, assumes with confidence that which he knew himself unable to establish by proof.

There are no limits, at the same time, to the extravagance of his imagination or invention, in thus wildly labouring to account for a subject of which he had no adequate or rational conception, nor any authentick information: in France, he says, "no

\* See Tyrwhitts *Chaucer*, IV. 325.

province, or district, seems to have given these fictions of the Arabians a more welcome, or a more early reception, than the inhabitants of Armorica, or Basse-Bretagne, now Britany, for no part of France can boast of so great a number of ancient romanceës. Many poems of high antiquity, compose'd by the Armorican bards, stil remain, and are frequently cite'd by father Lobineau in his learned history of Basse-Bretagne.\* “On the whole,” he ads, “we may venture to affirm,” that the chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, “suppose'd to contain the ideas of the *Welsh* bards, entirely consists of *Arabian* inventions.”† It must be confess'd that this poetical historian is very ready, at a venture, to affirm any thing, however imaginary and absurd. In another place he says, “*Gormund* king of the *Africans*, occurs:” and to prove how wel he understood Geoffrey of Monmouth, and how accurately this impostour was acquainted with Arabian allusions, this *Gormund*, in authentick history, was a king of the *Danes*, who infested Engleland in the ninth century, and was defeated and baptise'd by Alfred.‡

\* I, a 2.

† I, b 3.

‡ “That Stonehenge,” he says, “is a British monument erected in memory of Hengist's massacre, rests, i believe, on the sole evidence of Geoftry of Monmouth, who had it from the British bards. But why should not the testimony of the British bards be allowed on this occasion? For they did not invent facts, so much as fables. In the present case, Hengist's massacre is an allowed event....Even to this day, the massacre of

In all this high-flown panegyrick, there is not a word of truth, nor a particle of common-sense. There is no vestige or shadow of any ancient authority, that this pityful nation, a small colony from South-Wales, or Cornwall, in Britain, had any other fictions than such as they had carry'd over with them; nor is it true, excepting three poems, if they deserve such an appellation, of so low a period as the fifteenth century (a book of predictions, that is, of a pretended prophet name'd Gwingleaff, the MS. whereof was of the year 1450; the life of Gwenolé, abbot of Landevenec, one of their fabulous saints; and a little dramattick piece, on the takeing of Jerusaleme,) that they have a single fragment of poetry in their vernacular language. The learned priest who publish'd the dictionary of Pelletier,\* after his death, candidly admits, "that the Armorican Britons have not cultivate'd poetry; and the language, such as they speak it, does not appear able to ply to the measure, or to the sweetness, and to the harmony, of verse."† That they might or may have *chanters* or *musicians*, which the French call *minstrels*, we *fiddlers*, and themselves

Hengist is an undisputed piece of history." (I, 53.)—In the first place, Geoffrey does not say that he had this intelligence "from the British bards;" and, 2dly, there is not a word of truth in this masacre by Hengist: which Geoffrey borrow'd from Nennius (C. 47). A similar story is relate'd by Witikind.

\* *Dictionnaire de la langue Bretonne, par dom Louis de Pelletier.* Paris, 1752, fo.

† Preface, viii, ix.

*barz*, or *bards* is sufficiently probable or certain; but if, by *bard* be meant a composeër of possibly epick or lyrick poetry in his vernacular idiom, no proof can be adduce'd of such a character. At any rate, that father Lobineau "frequently," or even in one single instance, cites "many poems of high antiquity," or any poem whatever, ancient or modern, in the Arinorican language, is a most monstrous falsehood. The editour of this book has a right to be thus positive, having repeatedly, and unsuccessfully, examine'd the *Histoire de Bretagne*, (a work, by the way, of no veracity or authority, though in two ponderous folios,) with a view to discover these pretended citations, and has receive'd an assurance to the like effect, from Francis Douce, esquire, whose intimate acquaintance with every branch of French literature cannot possibly be disputeed.

The pretended *Breton lais* of a certain *Marie de France*, a Norman poetess of the 13th century, will be consider'd elsewhere.

In the circumstance just mention'd, he says, "about Wales, of its connection with Armorica, we perceive the solution of a difficulty which at first sight appears extremely problematical: i mean, says he, not onely that Wales should have been so constantly made the theatre of the old British chivalry, but that so many of the favourite fictions which occur in the early French romancees, should also be literally found in the tales and chronicles

of the elder Welsh bards."\* In this passage, also, is scarcely a word of sense or truth. The Welsh have no "tales" or "chronicles" to produce of "the elder Welsh bards," nor by any other writeër, more early, at least, than Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose fabulous *British history*, it must be confess'd, was seiz'd, with great avidity, by the French or Norman poets. If the Welsh have any such storys, they are, doubtless, from the French, or English, and, by way of further proof of their recency, are all in PROSE; as, for instance, "*Lhyvyr y Greal*," from the *Roman de S. Graal*, "*Ystori Boun o Hamtun*," from that of *Beuves*, or *Bevis*, of *Southampton*, "*Ystori Owen ab Yricn*," from the *Roman d'Ivain*, the *Cavalier au lion*," or "*Ywain and Gawin*:"† and, as to the idea of Warton, "that the *Welsh bards* might have been acquainted with the *Scandinavian scalds*:" nothing was ever more extravagant or absurd.‡

That the inhabitants of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, being the latest converts to christianity, retain'd their original manners and opinions longer than the other nations of Gothick race,§ may

\* I, a 3, b.

† See Lhuyds *Archæologia*, 265.

‡ Some such unauthoris'd opinion had already induce'd the elegant Gray to pollute his sublime pindarick on the bards with the Scandick mythology, of which the Britons had not a particle, and, for any thing that appears, were totally ignorant.

§ *Reliques*, &c. III. xi, xii, xiii. The eloquent passages of



certainly, be true, though such sort of conversion usually makes some difference in those matters: but it, by no means, follows that, therefor, they have preserve'd "more of the genuine compositions of their ancient poets, than their southern neighbours:" this is a fact to be prove'd, not by affirmative assertions, but by the production of ancient manuscripts, or the testimony of contemporaneous or veracious historians: neither of which is possess'd by all or any one of these three northern nations. "Hence," however, it is maintain'd that "the progress, among them, from poetical history to poetical fiction is very discernible;" meaning, it is presume'd, that they are equally fabulous. They have some old pieceës, it is say'd, that are in effect complete romanceës of chivalry;\* and a specimen is refer'd to in the 2d volume of *Northern antiquities*, &c. P. 148, &c. the age whereof is not ascertain'd, nor do its contents perfectly resemble any French or Engleish romance that we are at all acquainted with. In another part of the same work (page 321) is, apparently, introduce'd the Ovidian tale of *Perseus and Andromeda*, under the no less fictitious names of *Régner Lodbrog*, or hairy breeches, afterward king of Denmark, and *Thora*, the beautiful daughter of a Swedith prince, who was "guarded," as the poets took occasion to say, "by a furious

the original were, at first, intended to be given at length, but retrenchment was found necessary.

\* *Reliques*, &c. III, xviii.



dragon :” and this, it seems, upon the authority of *Regnara Lodbrogs saga*, which appears to be in print, and has been also translateëd by the above learned and ingenious prelate; who gives the passage thus : “ We fought with swords : when in Gothland i slew an enormous *serpent* : my reward was the beauteous *Thora*. Thence i was deem’d a man : they call’d me *Lodbrog* from that slaughter. I thrust the monster through with my spear, with the steel productive of splendid rewards.”\*

That they may likewise, “ have a multitude of sagas or histories on romantick subjects, some of them written SINCE the times of the crusades” will be readily admitted ; but there is not the slightest proof or pretext for assering that “ others” were so “ LONG BEFORE.” These *sagas*, in fact, are, for the most part, if not totally, translateëd, or imitateëd, from the French, and, at the same time, of very recent date. The “ *Saga of Ivent England kappe*,” in the royal library of Stockholm, is clearly the French romance of *Yvain*, or *Le chevalier au lion*, both of the twelfth or thirteenth century, accommodatëd, apparently to the Scandick traditions.† A large collection of such things is in the British museum, transcribe’d chiefly between the

\* See *Five pieces of Runic poetry*, P. 27. Even Warton suspects that the romantick amour between *Regner* and *Aslanga* is the forgery of a much lateër age (I, i 2, b.). This scaby sheep, indeed, infects the whole flock.

† See Wanleys *Antiquæ literaturæ septen. catalogus*, 325.

years 1660 and 1700 ; among which are the “ *Saga af Likle Peturs og Magelona, Saga af Wirgilio, Saga af Parcevals, Melufina og Remunds saga, Remundar keisara saga, Apollonius saga, &c.\** all or most of which are wel known French romanceës. The Danes have no historian whatever before the eleventh century.†

It is not at all more probable, or, at least, there is no sort of authority for supposing, that Rollo “ doubtless carry’d many scalds with him [into France or Neustria] from the north, who transmitted their skil to their children and succesfors.” It is, in fact, a mere *gratis dictum*, a *petitio principii*, an unfounded conjecture, an asserion without a proof: after the Normans had acquire’d the Christian religion, adopted the French language, and French manners, and, in a word, become perfect Frenchmen, they, unquestionablely, display’d equal, if not superior, talent and invention in the manufacture of roman-tick poems in that tongue ; all which, however, are on French or British subjects ; and none of them can be asserterd, without a flagrant violation of truth and fact, to contain one single allusion to the Iceland scalds, or Scandinavian poetry, none of whose puerile and extravagant fictions can be prove’d of so early an age.

There is not, in short, the weakest possible au-

\* See mister Ayscoughs *Catalogue*, No. 4957, &c.

† Stephens *Notæ in Saxonem*, 2.

thority, the slightest possible proof, that the minstrels were “ the genuine successors of the ancient BARDS, who, under different names, were admire’d and revere’d, from the earliest ages, among the people of Gaul, Britain, Ireland, and the north.” It is a mere hypothesis, without the least support, from fact or history, or any thing, in a word, but a visionary or fancyful imagination. There is no connection, no resemblance, between the scalds of Scandinavia and the minstrels of France; nor can any ancient historian be produce’d to countenance the extravagant and absurd fables with which the introduction to the “ *Histoire de Dannemarck*” by Mallet, translate’d into English under the title of “ Northern antiquities,” is stuff’d from beginning to end. The original authour was so ignorant as to confound the *Cimbri* with the *Cimmerii*,\* and the *Germans* or *Goths* with the *Celts* or *Gauls*, in defiance of ancient history and of common sense, without a word of truth. The *Edda* itself, if not a rank forgery, is at least a comparatively modern book, of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, manifestly compile’d long after Christianity was introduce’d into the north,† nor was such a system

\* He calls the latter “ Cimmerian Scythians;” utterly ignorant that the *Scythians* were the bitterest enemys of the *Cimmerians*, and actually drove them out of Europe into Asia.

† The pretended authour *Snorro* (no bad name for a dreamer) brings down this chronology thirty years after his death. See

of paganism brought hither by either Saxons or Danes, or ever entertain'd by any people in the world, nor are these scalds or poets ever mention'd by any old English historian, though we have several of the Saxon times. Saxo, a very ancient historian, knew nothing of any *Odin*, but a magician, whom the stupidity of the inhabitants of Upsal adore'd as a god, and sent to him from Constantinople a golden image; out of which his wife *Frigga* drew the gold; which being consume'd, he hung up the statue on the brink of a precipice, and, by the wonderful industry of art, render'd it vocal at the human touch: but, nevertheless, *Frigga*, preferring the splendour of finery to divine honours, subjected herself in adultery to one of her familiars; by whose cunning, the image being demolish'd, the gold, consecrate'd to publick superstition, she converted to the instrument of private luxury. *Odin* then flies, but afterward returns, and disperse's the magicians who had risen up in his absence. He attempts to kiss *Rinda*, daughter to the king of the Ruthes, and receives a slap on the face. According to *Torſæus*, he even ravish'd this young lady; but the passage, on looking into Saxo, to whom he seems to refer, could not be found. See, however, *Series regum Danie*, 149, where he

*Northern antiquities*, II, x xii. This outdoes Geoffrey of Monmouth. "Huet," according to Warton, "is of opinion that the *Edda* is entirely the production of Snorro's fancy;" and cites *Origin of romance*, 116 (I, h 4, l. n. 2.)

supposeës him contemporary with Hading king of Denmark, in the year 816 before Christ. He is blind of an eye, &c.\* There cannot be a more ridiculous story of a pagan deity! The forge'd and fabulous *Edda*, indeed, speaks of another Odin, surname'd the Persian, the father of the gods, to whom the origin of the art of the scalds was attributeëd, and who, according to the lyeing coxcomb allready notice'd, was defeated and put to flight by Pompey:† this groundless and absurd falsehood is, likewise, adopted by the learned and ingenious translator.‡

After all, it seems highly probable that the origin of romance, in every age or country, is to be sought in the different systems of superstition which have, from time to time, prevail'd, whether pagan or christian. The gods of the ancient heathens, and the saints of the more modern christians, are the same sort of imaginary beings; who, alternately, give existence to romanceës, and receive it from them. The legends of the one, and the fables of the other, have been, constantly, fabricateëd for the same purpose, and with the same view: the promotion of fanaticism, which, being mere illusion, can onely be exciteëd, or supported, by romance: and, therefor, whether Homer made the gods, or the gods made Homer, is of no sort of consequence, as

\* He dye'd in 1204; but has not one single date throughout his whole history.

† P. 59.

‡ *Reliques*, III, xvi.

the same effect was produce'd by either cause. There is this distinction, indeed, between the heathen deities, and the christian saints, that the fables of the former were indebted for their existence to the flowery imagination of the sublime poet, and the legends of the latter to the gloomy fanaticism of a lazy monk or stinking priest.

If the hero of a romance be, occasionally, borrow'd from heaven, he is, as often, sent thither in return. John of Damascus, who fabricate'd a pious romance, of *Barlaam* and *Josaphat*, in the eighth century, was the cause of these creations of his fancyful bigotry, and interested superstition, being place'd in the empyreal galaxy, and worship'd as saints. Even Rowland and Oliver, the forge'd and fabulous existence's of the Pseudo-Turpin, or some other monkish or priestly impostour, have attain'd the same honour.\* This idea is render'd the more plausible, if not positive, by the most ancient romances of chivalry, those of Charlemagne, for instance, and his paladins, Arthur, and his knights of the round-table, Guy, Bevis, and so forth; all of whom are the strenuous and successful champions of christianity, and mortal enemys of the Saracens,

\* See Quadrio, *Storia d'ogni poesia*, II, 594; where, from the annals of Pighi, he gives the following extract: "In Roncisvalle i santi Orlando, conte e paladino, Cenomanense, nipote di Carlo magno, e Oliviero, ducadi Ginevra martir; e sono celebrati da altri a 21 di Maggio, e i altri a 17 del medesimo mese:" it is, indeed, somewhat difficult to fix the precise æra of a saint that never existed.



whom they, voluntarily and wantonly, invade, attack, persecute, slaughter, and destroy. It was not, therefor, without reason, say'd by whomsoever, that the first romanceës were compose'd to promote the crusades, during which period, it is certain, they were the most numerous : and to prove how radically these mischievous and sanguinary legends were impress'd upon the minds of a bigoted and idiotick people for a series of no less than five centurys, about the year 1600, appear'd "The famous history of the seven champions of Christendome," in which the Rowland, Oliver, Guy, Bevis, &c. the fabulous heros of old romance, are metamorphos'd into saint George, saint Denis, saint James, saint Anthony, saint Andrew, saint Patrick, and saint David, the no less fabulous heros of legend and religious imposture ; most of whom receive a certain degree of adoration, like the pagan deities of old, by the dedication of churches, devotional days, and the like: which celebrate'd work, being a compound of superstition, and, as it were, all the lyes of christendom in one lye, is, in many parts of the country, believe'd, at this day, to be "as true as the gospel."

The first metrical romance, properly and strictly so call'd, that is known to have existed, and may possibly be still extant, in the dark recess of some national or monkish library, is the famous *chanson de Roland*, which was sung by a minstrel, or jugler, named Taillefer, rideing on horseback, at the



head of the Norman army, when marching, under duke William, to the battle of Hastings. The earliest mention of this celebrateëd song appears to be made by William Somerfet, a monk of Malmesbury, who finish'd his history, and, as it is presume'd, his life, in the year 1142: "*Tunc*," says he, in his description of the above engagement, "*CANTILENA ROLLANDI inchouta, ut Martium viri exemplum pugnatueros accenderet, &c.*"\* Maistre Wace or Gace, who completeëd his metrical romance of *Le Brut*, a free, but excellent, translation of Geoffrey of Monmóuths *British history*, in the year 1155, is the onely writeër to whom we are indebted for a knowlege of the subject of this ancient poem. His words are these:

" Taillefer, *qi mlt bien chantout,*  
*Sor un cheval qi tost alout,*  
*Devant le duc alout chantant*  
*De Karleniaigne, & de Rollant,*

\* *De gestis regum*, B. 3, P. 101. All our old historians, as Matthew Paris, and Matthew of Westminster, as wel as the chronicle of Albericus, nearly follow the words of this oldest authour. Henry of Huntingdon, Ralph de Diceto, Robert of Gloucester, and abbot Bromton, though they notice the pranks of this jugler, say nothing of his song. Fabyan, on whatever authority, mentions a stil earlier instance of the military use of this favourite performance. In describing the battle of Fountanet, between Charles the bald and his two brothers in 911, he says, "When the shote was spente, and the speres to shateryd, then both hostes ranne togyther wyth ROWLANDEs songe, so that, in shorte whyle, the grene felde was dyed into a perfyte redde." *Cronicle*, 1533, fo. xciii.

*E d'Oliver, & des vassals,*

*Qi morurent en Rencevals."*\*

Geoffrey Gaimar, an earlyer poet than Wace, though he onely appears as his continuator, speaks, likewise of this gallant minstrel; and gives a curious relation of the behaviour of his horse, the tricks he play'd with his spear, and sword, and his exploits in the action, which are, likewise, mention'd by some of our old historians.†

Doctor Burney, in his *History of musick* (II, 276), has inserted a pretendedly genuine copy of the *chançon de Roland*, by the marquis de Paulmy, with a spirited translation: but the marquis, in this *jeu d'esprit*, apparently mistook the nature of the ancient *chançon*, confounding it with that of a more recent period. The chevalier de Treslan, in his *Corps d'extraits de romans* (I, 356), gives a stanza, in modern French, of a different song, say'd to be chanted by the peasants of the Pyrenees: but most probably of his own invention. The real *chançon de Roland* was, unquestionably, a metrical ro-

\* *Histoire ou roman des ducs de Normendie*, (R. MSS. 4 C XI); and by no means *Le roman de Rou*, as hath been completely prove'd by *abbé de la Rue*.

Telfair, who wel could sing a strain  
Upon a horse that went amain,  
Before the duke rode singing loud,  
Of Charlemagne and Rowland good,  
Of Oliver, and those vassals,  
Who lost their lives at Roncevals.

† *Le Brut*, R. MSS. 13 A XXI.

mance, of great length, upon the fatal battle of Roncevaux; of which Taillefer onely chanted a part.

Le Grand d'Ausfy pretends that the *chançon de Roland* subsisted down to the third race, as, he says, it appears, by that reply so bold, known to every body, of a foldier to king John, who reproach'd him with singing it, at a time when there were no longer any Rowlands. This asfertation, however, so far as respects the above, or any other, song, is an absolute falsehood. The story alludeëd to, which has no better authority than that of Hector Bois, a fabulous writeër of the sixteenth century, is, literally, as follows: "When king John was come to Paris, calling the parliament together, he complain'd, with a pityful tone, of his misfortune, and the calamitys of the realm, and, amongst the rest, lamented that he could now find no Rowlands or Gawins: to which one of the peers, whose valour had been famous in his youth, and, therefore, an enemy to the kings sloth, answer'd, there would be no want of Rowlands, if there were Charleses."\* The anecdote, no doubt, supposeing it true, has some merit, but no sort of connection with, or allusion to, the *chançon de Roland*, unless as confounded among the number of metrical romanceës on the same subject. This, however, or some other, song or romance of Rowland appears

\* *Scotorum historia*, B. 15, fo. 339.

to have been popular in Italy, in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, as we learn from a story of Poggius: (speaking of one who deplore'd to the bystanders the fall and subversion of the Roman empire,) *hic par similis est, inquit [Antonius Luscus], viro Mediolanensi, qui die festo cum audisset unum ex grege cantorum, qui gesta heroum ad plebem decantant, recitantem MORTEM ROLANDI, qui septingentis jam ferme annis in prælio occubuit, CÆPIT ACRITER FLERE,*" &c. The wit, however, of *signor Lusco* seems to have, for this once, at least, been rather misplace'd.\*

Despairing of the existence of the *chanson de Roland*, among the number of ancient French poems which remain upon the subject of Charlemagne, Rowland, Oliver, and Roncesvalles,† the most ancient romance in that language, still preserve'd, has been thought to be one upon the achievements of Charlemagne, respecting the destruction of the monastery of Carcason and Narbon, and the construction of that of *De la Grace*. This history is say'd to have been writen, at the command of the above monarch, by a certain writeer name'd

\* *Facerie*, Bafil, 1488, 4to. See more, concerning Rowland and Oliver being fung upon the stage, in the *Antiquitates Italie* of Muratori, II, 844.

† This romance, the authours of the *Histoire littéraire* seem positive, was no other than that which bears the name of *Rolant & Olivier*, and is mark'd among the MSS. of Charles V, VI, and VII; and refer to the *Histoire de l'aca. des inscrip.* t. 1, part 1, p. 317.

*Philomena*, and to have been, afterward, at the instance of St. Bernard, abbot, and the convent of the say'd monastery, turn'd into Latin by one Paduan, or Vital, between the years 1015 and 1019: but, as it mentions the twelve peers of France, *le comte de Flandres*, a title which did not exist til fifty years after the death of Charlemagne; and the city of Montauban, which was not built til 1144 it cannot, possibly, be of such high antiquity. It is extant, though, apparently, in prose, in the national library, Num. 27.\*

Another, nearly of the same age, is the *roman de Guillaume d'Orange, surnommé au Court nez*, (or short-nose) which contains the history of *St. Guillaume de Guillone*, and is conjecture'd, to be of the tenth century, but is, more probably, of the following. Many copys of it are extant in different libraries: and a full account of it may be seen in Catel's *Memoires de Languedoc*.† The authour calls himself *Guillaumes de Bapaume*.‡ It appears, from a passage of *Ordericus Vitalis*, who flourish'd in 1140, to have been sung, in his time, by the minstrels, though not so worthy of attention as a more authentick narrative. His words are: “ *Canitur vulgo à jocularibus, de illo [sci. S. Gulielmo]*

\* See Montfaucon *Bib. bib.* II, 1253; *Histoire lit. de la France*, IV, 211, 212; VI, 13; VII, lxxi; and Catel, *Memoires de Languedoc*, 401, 409, 547, 566.

† 549, 569, &c. See also *Histoire lit. de la France*, VII, lxxi.

‡ *Sinners Catalogue*, tome 3, page 333.

*cantilena, sed jure præferenda est relatio authentica, quæ à religiosis doctoribus, solerter est edita, & à studiosis lectoribus reverenter lecta est in communi fratrum audientia.*"\*

Dom Calmet maintains that the *roman de Garin le Loheran*, the authour whereof live'd in 1050, is the most ancient romance which the French have :† and to prove the age of *Ogier le Danois* (not that of Adenez), the authours of the *Histoire littéraire* quote the authority of Metellus, a monk of Tegornsee in Bavaria, who wrote about 1060, and haveing occasion to speak of the hero of that romance, ads, "whom that people [the Burgundians], singing old songs, call Osiger." (VII, lxxvi.)

The next, in point of age, that is yet known, is probably, a chronicle-history of the Britons and English, from Jason and the achievement of the golden fleece, to the death of Henry the first, which appears to have been compose'd at the instance of dame Constance Fitz-Gilbert, before the year 1147; in which year dye'd Robert earl of Gloucester, natural son of king Henry the first, who had sent the book he had cause'd to be translate'd, according to those of the Welsh kings, to Walter Espec, who dye'd in or before 1140,‡ of whom lady Constance borrow'd it (this seems, from the mention of Walter

\* L. 6.                      † *Histoire lit.* VI, 13:

‡ This date is ascertain'd by the death, in that year, of archbishop Thurstan, a witness to his foundation-charter of Rievaulx-abbey.



the archdeacon, to be Geoffrey of Monmouths *British history*, which is address'd to earl Robert), a fragment of which is annex'd, by way of continuation to the *Brut* of *maistre* Wace, in the kings MSS. 13 A XXI: no other copy being known to exist.

Alexandre Bernay, surname'd Paris, and Lambert li Cors, are the joint authours of a romance of *Alexander* in French verse, beginning "*Qui vers de riche histor veut scavoir*," in 1051, or, according to others, in 1193, which may onely be the date of the MS.

The next is *Maistre Wace*, *Gace*, or *Gasse*, a native of the ile of Jersey, and canon of Caën in Normandy, an excellent poet, who compose'd the romance of *Le Brut*; as he tels us, in 1155, the *roman de Rou*; the romance of William Longsword; the romance of duke Richard I. his son; the history of the dukes of Normandy; a compendium or abridgement of the same history; the life of St. Nicholas; and the *roman du chevalier du lion*, in 1155: all performanceës of considerable merit.\*

\* The Christian name of *Maistre Wace* is say'd by Huet, (who cites no authority) to have been *Robert*, (*Origines de Caen*, Rouen 1702, vo. P. 607.) In *La vie de S. Nicholas*, citeed by Hickes, *Gr. A. S. P.* 146, 147, he is call'd "*mestre Guace*" (Tyrwhitts Chaucer, IV, 59): and in the MS. of *Le chevalier au lion* his name is writen *Gasse*. Tyrwhitt suspects that "*Le martyre de St. George en vers François par Robert Guaco*,"



Benoit, or Benedict, de Saint-More, contemporary with Wace, wrote "*lestoire des duc de Normandie*," and the "*roman de Troie*;" both which are among the Harleian MSS.

"*Le roman de Florimon*" is of the year 1180; the author being unknown.

Christian or Chrestien, de Troyes, wrote, in 1191 *Les romans de chevalier a l'epée* [ou *L'histoire de Lancelot du lac*], *du chevalier à la charrette* ou *De la carette*, (perhaps the same with the precedeing) *du chevalier à lion*, *du prince Alexandre*, &c. de

mention'd by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod. 3745 [Mem. de l'acad. D. I. & B. L. V. xvii, 6. 731] is by this *Wace* or *Gace* [whose name, by the way, is frequently corrupted into *Euflace*, *Wistace*, or *Huiflacc*, *Vacces*, and *Vaches*; particularly by Warton, who believes them to be two distinct persons; and confounds the *Brut* with the *roman de Rou* [I, 62]. *Wace*, or *Gace*, however, was certainly a baptismal name; there being two other French poets who bore it, *Gasse Brulés*, and *Gasse de Vigne*.

The title of master, or *maistre*, also, is constantly prefix'd to the *christian*, and never to the *surname*, instancees of the latter, of the 12th century, being, at the same time, exceedingly rare. Had the name of *Wace* been *Robert*, he would have call'd himself *Maistre Robert*, and not *Maistre Wace*.

\* \* \* The passage in Lebeuf (*Recherches sur les plus anciennes traductions en langue Françoisé*) is as follows: "*Un manuscrit de la bibliothèque Colbert (Cod. 3745) nous fournit le martyre de St. George en vers François par Robert Guaco, une vie de St. Thomas de Canterberi en vers François Alexandrins, par frere Benet, & une histoire du martyre de Hugues de Lincoln, enfant tué par un Juif, l'an 1206.*" *Guaco*, however, is not *Guace*.

*Graal, de Perceval, d'Erec*, with others which are now lost.\*

There are numerous MS. romanceës in verse, in different librarys, some of which, no doubt, are as ancient as any here notice'd. The rest are too numerous to specify, as the two subsequent centurys were stil more prolifick.

The authours of the earlyest French *romans* in rime, generally declare their names in the course of their own works, "*Meistre Wace ki fist cest livre*," and are, occasionally, notice'd by a brother poet; as, for instance, Geoffrey Gaimar, the authour of a British chronicle, allready mention'd, who not onely names himself, but David, his contemporary, of whom nothing more is known; Lambert li Cors, one of the authours of the *roman d'Alexandre, maistre Wace*, the authour of *le Brut, le roman de Rou, l'Histoire de Normandie, le chevalier au lion, le geste de Alisandre*, and several other poems, name themselves, and the last, in some, repeatedly; all of whom, or of which are of the twelfth century. "Almost every one of the [numberless] tales call'd *fabliaux*," says M. Le Grand, are known

\* In the *roman de Perceval* he says,

" *Cil qui fit d'Enée & d'Enide,  
Et les commandements d'Ovide,  
Et l'art d'aimer en roman mist,  
Del roy 'Marc' & d'Uselt la blonde,  
Et de la Hupe, & de l'Eronde,  
Et del Rosignol la muance,  
Un autre conte, commence, &c."*

to be by some poet or other whose name is mention'd." Of the authenticity of these names there can be no suspicion; but those whose names appear, now and then, in the old prose romanceës, printed or manuscript, are mostly, if not constantly, men of straw; such, for instance, as *Robert de Borron*, the pretended authour or translator of "*Lancelot du lac, mise en François du commandement d'Henri roi de Angleterre;*"\* "*Lucas* [or *Luces*] *chevalier, sieur du chastel du Gast pres de Salisberi, Anglois,*" the pretended translator, "*de Latin en François,*" of "*Le roman de Tristan et Iseult;*"† "*Maistre Gualtier Map* [*ad adviz au roy Henry son seigneur*], of the "*Histoire de roy Artus et des chevaliers de la table ronde* [*avec le jaint Graal*];"‡ and *Rusticien de Pise* or *Pisa*, otherwise "*Rusticiens de Puise,*" who translateëd *Gyron le courtois*, from the book of the lord Edward, king of

\* Warton, I, 114.

† Warton, I, 115.

‡ *Idem*, II, fig. c 3. It is not meant to asert that there was no such person; as he was, in reality, archdeacon of Oxford, and a very excellent and humorous Latin poet. He was merely drawn into this scrape by the French romanceës, (and, after them, by the Welsh writeërs,) who confounded him with another of the same name, also archdeacon of Oxford, who is the man say'd by Geoffrey of Monmouth to have presented him with the original Welsh of the *British history*. Warton, as is usual with him, prefers Walter de Mapes (II, c 2, b), because the chronology proves absurd and impossible: he not being archdeacon of Oxford before 1197, about 44 years after the death of Geoffrey: but this, it must be confess'd, is a very temperate anachronism for "honest Tom."

England, when he went beyond sea, to conquer the holy sepulchre.\* No French romance of chivalry, it is believe'd, or should, at least, be believe'd without seeing it in an ancient MS. is in the Latin language (except those of the Pseudo-Turpin and Geoffrey of Monmouth may be so call'd, or it may be a translation or imitation); though the pretence is common: *Perceforest* was first "*ecrit en Grec, puis traduit en latin, &c.*" and *Berynus* "*de langage incongneu.*" It was a weak and unfounded observation of Menage, that whenever these faggots pretend to translate from the *Latin*, they mean the *Italian*.†

"The profess'd romanceës of chivalry," in the opinion of doctor Percy, "seem to have been first compose'd in France, where, also, they had their name:" though he, elsewhere, with little consistency, thinks "The stories of king Arthur and his round table, [the most fruitful and popular subjects of the French and Norman poets] may be reasonably suppose'd of the growth of this island; both

\* This and two other romans, *du Bruth*, and *de Meliadus de Leonnois*, are in the duke of Vallieres catalogue, attribute'd to this "*maistre Rusticiens de Pise*;" and in *Bib. du roi* 6796 à 6983 are *plusieurs volumes de Giron de Courtois, mis en François par Huc* [Luc] *seigneur du château du Gat.*"

† *Dans la bibl. nation. No. 3713 [c]i un MS. de la fin du XII siecle qui renferme le roman de Turpin et celui D'Amis et Amillon en vers Latins.*" The former, at least, was in Latin prose, of the preceding age; and the latter of that in which they were, in all probability, both verify'd by the same hand.

the French, and the Armoricans," he ads, probably, haveing "them from Britain." The former, indisputably, made great use of Geoffrey of Monmouths fabulous history; but what they had before it does not appear; neither, in fact, does this impostour ever mention *the round table*, though master Wace does, not many years after: and, with respect to the Armoricans, who are not known, on any ancient or respectable authority, to have ever possess'd a single story on this subject, however confidently the fact may be aserted, or plausibly presume'd, it is ridiculous to account for their mode of geting what it cannot be prove'd they ever had.

Before the year 1122,\* and even, according to the French antiquarys, in the eleventh century, had appear'd a book intitle'd, in the printed copys, "*Joannis Turpini Historia de vita Caroli magni et Rolandi.*" This Turpin is pretended to be the archbishop of Rheims, whose true name, however, was *Tilpin*,† and who dye'd before Charlemagne; though Robert Gaguin, in his licentious translation of this work, 1527, makes him, like some one else, relate his own death. Another pretended version of this Pseudo-Turpin, which is say'd to have been made by one Mickius (or Michel) le Harnes,

\* Warton, I, c 2, who cites *Magn. chron. Belgic.* P. 153. *sub anno* and refers to Longs *Bibl. Hist. Gal. num.* 6671, and Lambac. ii. 333.

† See Flodoardus *Historia ecclesiæ Remensis*, L. 2, C. 17.

who live'd in the time of Philip the august, or 1206,\* has little or nothing in common with its false original, being, in fact, the romance of *Regnaut*, or Reynald, and not that of *Roland* who is never once mention'd in the head-chapters, and very rarely in the book. Mister Ellis, who took it, without inspection, to be a fair translation of the false Turpin, in 1207, says, "The real authour was perhaps a Spaniard;" but this is without authority; and in fact, the Spaniards have no romance of any such antiquity.† Mister Warton calls this fabulous history, "the ground-work of all the chimerical legends which have been relateëd concerning the conquests of Charlemagne and his twelve peers:"‡ but this, at least, requires it to have been compos'd before the year 1066, when the adventures or exploits of Charlemagne, Rowland, and Oliver, were chanted at the battle of Hastings. As a strong internal proof, however, that this romance was written long after the time of Charlemagne, he says, that the historian, speaking of the numerous chiefs and kings who came with their armies to assist his hero, among the rest mentions earl Oell; and adds "Of this man there is a song commonly sung among the minstrels *even to this day*."§ In another place, he

\* See *Memoires de l'academie des. inscrip.* IV. 208.

† The original Latin was never printed separately, and first of all insert'd in a collection, intitle'd "*Germanicarum rerum quatuor chronographi*, &c. Francofurti, 1566, fo.

‡ I, c.

§ I, c. 2.



says, that “ Turpin’s history was artfully forged under the name of that archbishop about the year 1110, with a design of giving countenance to the crusades from the example of so high an authority as that of Charlemagne, whose pretended visit to the holy sepulchre is described in the twentieth :” \* which seems highly probable.

In the year 1138 Geoffrey of Monmouth, afterward bishop of St. Asaph, set forth a certain work, which, in his epistle dedicatory to Robert earl of Gloucester, he says, he had translate’d from a very ancient book in the British tongue, which had been brought to him by Walter archdeacon of Oxford, a man of great eloquence, and learn’d in foreign histories, containing, in a regular story, and elegant style, the actions of them all, from Brutus, the first king of the Britons, down to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo. Whether Geoffreys Latin book, which has, certainly made its way in the world, and infected, or influence’d, more or less, national history in almost every part of the globe, was an actual translation, or entirely, or partly of his own manufacture, is not a question here intended to be discuss’d ; but all allow that the British original has never been found, unless in the shape of a translation from the Latin. Mister Warton, indeed; modestly enough, inclines to think, “ that the work

\* I, 124. In the national library, Number 3718, is a MS. of the end of the 12th century, which contains the romance of *Turpin*, and that of *Amis* and *Amillion* in Latin verse.



consists of fables thrown out by different rhapsodists at different times," which afterward "were collected and digested into an entire history," and perhaps with new decorations of fancy aded by the compilèr, who most probably was one of the profess'd bards, or rather a poetical historian, of Armorica or *Basse Bretagne*. In this state, and under this form, he supposeës "it to have fallen into the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth."\* However this may be, as there is little or no evidence, though much improbability, upon the subject, the readers of the learned historian may be permitted, for the present, to retain his opinion: but "Amid the gloom of superstition, in an age of the grossest ignorance and credulity," he says, "a taste for the wonders of oriental fiction was introduce'd by the Arabians into Europe...These fictions coincideing with the reigning manners, and perpetually kept up and improve'd in the tales of troubadours and minstrels, seem to have center'd about the eleventh century in the ideal histories of Turpin and Geoffrey of Monmouth, where they form'd the ground-work of that species of fabulous narrative called romance.† Whatever become of the inducing causeës, the conclusion is, unquestionablely, very plausible, if not perfectly true, for, whether there were any thing upon the subject of Charlemagne and Arthur before the appearance of these two books, it is very certain there was a prodigious number after it.

\* Ib.

† I, i, 4.

The *fabliaux* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (a name for which the English language affords no appropriate term, nor the French any synonym) extant in MS. in several librarys, are almost innumerable. Three volumes have been publish'd by M. Barbazan under the title of "*Fabliaux et contes des poëtes François des XII, XIII, XIV, & XV es siècles*:" Paris 1756, 1776, 3 vols, 12mo, which afford a sufficient specimen of this species of French poetry: while several, as wel of these as others, have been epitomise'd and transprose'd by Le Grand d'Ausfy, who has accompany'd them with ingenious and interesting dissertations and notes, at first, in two volumes, 8vo, and, secondly, in five, 12mo.

It has been imagine'd, as Warton thinks, that the first romanceës were compose'd in metre, and sung to the harp by the poets of Provence at festival solemnitys;\* but, according to more authentick writeers, these poets borrow'd their art from the French or Normans. He, likewise, asserts, that the troubadours were the first writeers of metrical romanceës.† The provençal poetry, in fact, was for the most part, of a different description, and abounded chiefly in allegory and satire. There is but one

\* I, 112. He, elsewhere, affirms that "The troubadours of Provence, an idle and unsettled race of men, took up arms, and follow'd their barons in prodigious multitudes, to the conquest of Jerusalem." (110.) An absurd falsehood.

† I, 147.

single romance existing that can be imputeëd to a troubadour, that of *Gerard de Roussillon*;\* nor is it certain that, if they had compose'd ever so many, they would have rival'd the French, in point of either merit, or precedency.

Warton, indeed, misled, apparently, by that *ignis fatuus*, Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, and even wishing, it would seem, to emulate and outdo that confident and mendacious prelate,† has been induce'd to asfert that “ Before these expeditions into the east became fashionable, the principal and leading subjects of the old fables were the atchievements of king Arthur, with his knights of the round-table, and of Charlemagne with his twelve peers. But, in the romances written after the holy war, a new set of champions, of conquests, and of countries, were [was] introduced. Trebizonde took place of Roncevalles, and Godfrey of Bulloigne, Solyman,

\* The Provençal poets had got an extravagantly high character, which this ingenious writeër has entirely deprive'd them of. M. de Sainte-Palaye, who had made large and interesting collections upon the history and pœtry of the troubadours, which he perfectly understood, suffer'd, unfortunately, his papers to fall into the hands of one Milot, a perfect blockhead, who neither knew the Provençal, nor any thing else.

† See his pretended hypothesis of the origin of romance, first printed in the supplement to Jarvises *Don Quixote*, and, afterward, in his own, and several subsequent, editions of *Shakspeare*, a complete specimen of ignorance, impudence, and falsehood, which has been so ably and decisively confuted and expose'd by the learned and judicious Tyrwhitt, and deserves only to be treated with indignation and contempt.

Nouraddin, the caliphs, and the cities of Ægypt and Syria became the favourite topics."

In all this rhapsody there is scarcely a single word of truth. It is sufficiently notorious that before the first crusade, or for more than half a century after it, there was not one single romance on the achievements of Arthur or his knights. Neither is it more true that any such change took place with regard to the subjects of romance as he here pretends. That there was a romance on *Godfrey of Bologne* is certain; but that it ever obtain'd the popularity of those of *Charlemagne*, *Rowland*, *Oliver*, and *Roncevalles*, which are almost innumerable, or that *Solyman*, *Nouraddin*, the caliphs, and the cities of *Egypt* and *Syria*, were ever "the favourite topics," is nothing but random assercion, falsehood, and imposition; there not being a single romance on any one of these subjects.\*

A curious passage in the ancient chronicle of *Bertrand Guesclin* as citeed by Du Cange, under the word *MINISTELLI*, preserves the names of several ancient French *romans*, some of which are not otherwise known to have existed, and expressly says they were compose'd by the minstrels:

"*Qui veut avoir renom des bons & de vaillans,  
Il doit aler souvent ala pluie et au champs,  
Et estre en la bataille, ainsy que fu Rollans,  
Les quatre fils Haimon, et Charlon li plus grans,*

\* History of English poetry, I, 110.

Li dus Lions de Bourges, *et* Gulon de Connans,  
 Perceval li Galois, Lancelot, *et* Tristans,  
 Alixandres, Artus, Godfroï li sachans,  
*De quoy cils menestriers font les nobles romans."*

None of these rimeing romanceës have been ever printed, unless a comparatively modern one, intitle'd *Le roman de la rose*, which is wel known, and, as is some where say'd, *Tristan & la belle Yseult*, *Richard sans peur*, at Paris without date, and at Lions, in 1597, *Duc Guillaume roy d'Angleterre*, *Guisgardus & Sigismund*, 1493, &c. *Le roman de Troye*, by Jean de Meun, one of the authours of the *Roman de la rose*: but, if really so, the copys (of all but the last) are as scarce as manuscripts.

In the course, it is thought, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centurys, and, possibly, even, in the latter part of the thirteenth, many of the old metrical French romanceës were turn'd into prose, and, afterward, printed. A numerous and invaluable collection of the former were in the *Chateau d'Anet*, the residence of Diane de Poitiers, the favourite mistress of Henry the third, in 1724, but now every where disperse'd.

Nicholas de Herberay, *seigneur des Esfars*, who publish'd, in 1574, a French version of the first eight books of the celebrateëd Spanish romance of *Amadis de Gaule*,\* asserts that this far-fame'd and

\* Warton calls this " a romance written in Spain, by Vasco de Lobeyra, before the year 1300;" but the authour, or



exquisite story made its first appearance in France, affirming that he had moreover found some remnant of an old manuscript in the Picard language, from which he thought that the Spaniards had made their translation; and which is possibly still extant.\* This, it is presume'd, was in verse, in the manner of all or most other ancient romanceës; which is the more probable, as the printed history of *Thefeus de Cologne*, by Anthony Bonnemere, at Paris, in or about 1534, professes to be translated “*de vieille rime Picarde*.” There was, likewise, in the collection of M. Lancelot, a MS. about the year 1330, intitle'd “*Autre roman du renard*,” in verse, “*en langue Picarde*.”

The progress of the Italian and Spanish was much like that of the French, but, possibly, less corrupted, as it is say'd that there are specimens of the Spanish and Italian poets which are, at once, Latin and the vernacular idiom. Romance did not make its appearance in Italy before the time of Dante or Boccace; nor, perhaps, in a stricter sense, previous to the *Morgante maggiore* of Pulci; from which time, down to the seventeenth century, the number of their *romanzi*, or *rimi cavallareschi*, all in the same kind of metre, is prodigious; some of which translator, in fact, is totally unknown; neither was Vasco de Lobeyra a Spaniard, but a Portuguese; nor could it be written before 1450, or, as mister Tyrwhitt thinks, before the invention of “the art of printing.”

\* See Tresfan, *Corps d'extraits de romans*, III, 4; also Fontenelle; *Theatre*, tome 3.

are sufficiently known to be of great and sterling merit. Voltaire, who was in one part of his life, so disgusted with a translation of Ariosto, in French prose, after having become acquainted with the original, prefer'd it to the poetry of Homer and Virgil.\*

It arriv'd stil lateër in Spain ; which can boast of nothing in the shape of a metrical romance, but an epick poem or two, of the thirteenth century ; their *Historias de cavallerias*, or, what we call, *romanceës of chivalry*, being, though sufficiently numerous, and, occasionally, of great merit, uniformly in prose. That which we term a *ballad*, or lyrical narrative, is call'd in Spain *uno romancé*. Among the prodigious quantity of these compositions there are few or none older than the close, at most, of the fifteenth century. Some it is true, are upon Moorish subjects, but it is false that any one is a translation from Arabian poetry : not even among the curious and beautiful specimens in the *Guerras civiles de Granada*, publish'd originally under such a pretence.

## § 2. SAXON AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE. —

With respect to the original letters or characters of the Saxons, we are able to obtain no satisfactory

\* See, as to the progress of the Italian dialect, Muratoris *Antiquitates*, a book of prodigious learning and authenticity.



information. It is highly improbable that they had a written language, when, in a state of paganism, they arriv'd, as the allys of the Britons, in 449.

The Britons, who had already profess'd christianity, though not popery, for two or three centuries, appear to have had books and writings, and, consequently, letters and characters, long before the time of Gildas, who wrote about 560, and expressly mentions that all such had been destroy'd in hostile convulsions, or carry'd abroad. The Saxons were much fonder of exterminateing them, than of learning their language.

St. Augustine arriv'd in 597, and made considerable progress in the conversion of the Saxons from pagan to popeish superstition; but neither Bede, nor any other ancient writeër, relates that he taught them their letters: in process of time, however, they certainly had the art of writing, both in Latin and Saxon, and, in the following age, abounded with men of learning, if not of sense; of whom Bede, who dy'd in 731, is a sufficient instance.

According to Nennius, St. Patrick, who came to Ireland in 434, wrote 365 alphabets [one for every day in the year], and upward [in order, it is presume'd, to teach the Irish to read].\*

Neither the Britons, nor the Irish, nor the Saxons, had a K, or a Q, an X, [or a Z], in their language.†

\* C. 58.

† See Lhuyd, *apud* Lewis, 61.

## ROMANCE AND MINSTRELSY. lvii

The Britons, according to Lhuyd, “ had letters before the time of Juvenal and Tacitus;” for, says he, “ i have lately seen a coin of *Berach* (or *Bericus*), with his name upon it, in the time of the emperor Claudius; and there are others also that bear the name of *Caswallon*, prince of the Britains [Britons], who fought against Julius Cæsar, beside several others, the times of which cannot be determine’d.\*”

Cæsar, however, has given his positive testimony that the Britons had no coin’d money, makeing use of brass rings, &c.† and Gildas asserts, that whatever they had of brass, silver, or gold, was mark’d with the image of Cæsar.‡

Many Irish clerks came over to Engleland, and, being esteem’d for their learning (which consisted, it is presume’d, chiefly in a knowlege of the scriptures, the expositors thereof, and the ancient fathers), were prefer’d to bishopricks, and abbeys. King Oswald, in 635, as we learn from Bede, who had, in banishment, receive’d the sacrament of baptism among the Scots (*i. e.* Irish), sent to the elders of that nation, desiring they would send him a bishop, which they did. This was Aidan, a man of singular meekness, piety, and moderation, to whom the king appointed his episcopal see in the ile of Lindisfarn; and, being unskilful in the Engleish tongue, the king, when he preach’d to the people, use’d to interpret for him. From that time,

\* See Lhuyd, *apud* Lewis, 62. † Gallick war, B. 6. ‡ C. 5.

he says, many of the Scots began dayly to come into Britain, and, with great devotion, to preach the word of faith to those provincees over which Oswald reign'd. Churches were erected in several placees; possessions were giveen, of the kings bounty, to build monasterys; the Engleish, great and small, were, by their Scottish masters, instructed in the rules and observance of regular discipline; for most of them that came to preach, were monks.\* Maildulfus, the founder of Malmesbury, in 675, was, likewise, a Scot of Ireland. It is, therefor, sufficiently probable that these Irish priests taught the Saxons their letters; between which and the Saxon, there is a considerable affinity; whereas, admitting the Britons capable of doing this themselves, it cannot be prov'd that their characters at all resemble'd the Saxon, as, if they be able to produce a manuscript, or inscription of the sixth century, as they pretend they are, it wil, indubitably, turn out to be in the Roman letters of that time.

When Coinvalch (or Cenwalch), king of the West-Saxons, was, in 650, reinstateed into the kingdom, there came into his province, from Ireland, a certain pontif, by name Agilbert, by nation, verily, a Gaul (or Frank), but then haveing remain'd no small time in Ireland, for the sake of learning the scriptures, join'd himself to the king, assumeing the ministry of preaching: whose erudition and industry, the king seeing, ask'd him (an episcopal see

\* B. 3, C. 3.

being there accepted) to tarry a pontif to his nation: who, asfenting to his prayers, prefideëd over the fame nation, by facerdotal right, for many years. At length the king, who knew onely the language of the Saxons, weary of his BARBAROUS SPEECH,\* fubintroduce'd into the province another bifhop of his own tongue, by name Viri, and himfelf ordain'd in Gaul; and, divideing the province into two parifhes, offer'd to this an epifcopal feat in the city *Venta*, which from the nation of the Saxons is call'd *Vintancaestir* (now Wincheſter): Whence Agilbert being grievouſly offended, that the king ſhould act in this matter without conſulting him, return'd to Gaul, and (the biſhoprick of the city of Paris being accepted) there dye'd an old man, and ful of days.†

The Saxons arrive'd in 449, as allys of the Britons, whom, haveing firſt defeated their enemys, they drove, after many a fierce engagement, into the mountainous parts of the Weſt of Engleland, where they have been ſuffer'd to remain. Though theſe treacherous ſtrangers are not known to have brought over with them books or letters, or, in ſhort, any kind of literary ſtock, while they continue'd pagans, they were unqueſtionably a brave and warlike nation, but, upon their converſion to

\* In the original, "*pertæſus barbaræ loquelæ.*" This barbarous jargon would ſeem to have been Lauh, which the Saxon monarchs had not yet acquire'd.

† Bede, *H. E. L. 3, C. 7.*

Christianity, their kings became monks, the people cowards and slaves, unable to defend themselves, and a prey to every invader. The same effects had, not long before, been already produce'd upon the Romans, as they have, in modern times, upon the Mohawks, who, in consequence of a certain change, have lost all that was valuable in their national character, and are become the most despicable tribe that is left unextirminate'd. It will be in vain to expect any proofs of genius from such a savage and degrade'd people, if, as Warton pretends, "the tales of the Scandinavian scalds," flourish'd among the Saxons, who succeeded to the Britons, and became possess'd of Engleland in the sixth century, may be justly presume'd,\* they had been soon lost, as neither vestige, nor notice, is preserve'd of them in any ancient writer. They had a sort of poetry, indeed, a kind of bombast, or insane, prose, from which it is very difficult to be distinguish'd. Alfred, it must be confess'd, a great prince, but a wretched bigot, upon the testimony of his chaplain, or confessor, who wrote his life, though he allows him to have remain'd illiterate, through the unworthy neglect, for shame! of his parents and nurse's, until twelve years of age or upward; says that the Saxon poems, being by day, and night an attentive auditor, very often hearing from the relation of others, being docile, he retain'd by heart."† He had even form'd a manual,

\* I, c 2, 6.

† Asfer, 16.

or common-place-book, call'd, in Saxon, his hond-bee, in which were several piecees of poetry by St. Aldhelm, who [dye'd in 709, and] successfully cultivateed that study, and particularly a song he had made, which in the time of Asfer was stil sung by the vulgar.\* He translateed the ecclesiastical history of Bede, Orosiuses *Ormeſta mundi*, Boetius *de conſolatione philoſophiæ*, pope Gregorys *Pastorale*, and the *Pſalms of David*, from Latin into his vernacular tongue. It has been pretended, alſo, that he pay'd the ſame attention to Æſops fables, but this requires authority. Venerable Bede, who dye'd in 731, had been a prodigy of learning, but only diſplay'd his talents in Latin; at the commencement of Alfreds reign, in 864, according to his own declaration, “ There were very few on this ſide the Humber that could underſtand their dayly prayers in Engleiſh, or translate any letter from the Latin. I think,” he ſays, “ there were not many beyond the Humber; they were ſo few, that i, indeed, cannot recollect one ſingle inſtance on the ſouth of the Thames, when i aſſume'd the kingdom.”†—“ Before every thing,” he ſays, “ had been ravage'd and burn'd by the Danes, the churches, through all the Engliſh nation, flood ful of veſſels, and books, and prieſts. Of the uſe of their books,

\* W. Malmes. 342. Asfer ſays it was a collection of hours, and pſalms, and prayers, which he carry'd in his boſom day and night. He ſays nothing of Aldhelm.

† Preface to the *Pastorale*, by himſelf.



however, they knew very little, as they were not written in the language which they spoke. So that though they might see their treasures, they were unable to explore them.”\*

The Saxon language, after having been corrupted by the Danes, who spoke a tongue of distant affinity, began to be infected, by the Norman-French, before the conquest of Engleland. We are told by Ingulph, that “Edward the confessor, born in Engleland, but brought up, and tarrying a very long time in Normandy, had almost become a Frenchman, bringing over, and attracting, a great many from Normandy, whom, being promoted to various dignities, he raised very high.†...The whole land, therefore, being introduced under the king, and the Normans, began to dismiss the English customs, and, in many things, to imitate the manners of the French; the Gallick idiom, that is, all the great men in their courts to speak; their charters and deeds to make; and their own custom in these, and many other things, to be ashamed of.” All the charters granted to Croyland by the En-

\* *Ibi.* There is but one single romance, and that in prose, extant in the Saxon dialect; it is the legend of Apollonius of Tyre, and has been translated from the Latin, in the library of Bennet-college.

† Gervase of Tilbury says, he was educated with the duke of Neustria (Normandy), for that, among the most noble English, a custom prevailed to bring up their sons with the French, for the use of arms, and taking away the barbarism of their native language. (*Olia imperialia*).



gleish kings, according to this learned abbot, were written in the Saxon hand "until these our times," he says, "which partly were written two ways, as wel in the *French* hand, as in the *Saxon*. For the *Saxon*, by all the Saxons and Mercians, until the times of king Alfred, who by the French doctors was excellently instructed, use'd in all chirographs, from the time of the say'd lord the king, had become vile by disuse; and the *French hand*, because more legible, and very delectable to the sight, excel'd, more frequently, from day to day, please'd among all the Engleish." \* He says further, that, a few years before the fire in 1091, he took out of the chartary several chirographs, written in a Saxon hand, of which they had duplicates and triplicates, and deliver'd them to the chantor dom Fulmar, to be preserve'd in the cloister, for teaching the younger monks to learn the *Saxon hand*, forasmuch as such *letter*, for a long time, bycause of the Normans, now neglected, had become vile, and was now known but to a few elders; that the younger, instructed to read this *letter*, might be the more apt, in their old age, to alledge the muniments of their monastery against its adverstaries." †

The Saxon natives, a spiritless and cowardly race, who had been long accustomed to the conquest and ascendancy of every neighbouring nation which thought proper to invade them, as the Scots, for instance, the Picts, and the Danes, the last of

\* *Ili.* 65.

† *Ili.* 94.

which had actually takeën posfesſion of the crown and kingdom of Engleland, and held it for ſeveral reigns, were, after the Norman conqueſt, reduce'd to a ſtate of baſeneſs and ſervility. They had been deprive'd of their native landlords, who were forfeited, baniſh'd, and put to death; and their eſtates conſcated, by the rapacious Normans; they had been deprive'd of their laws, and a final attempt was now made to aboliſh their language. This, however, though great pains were takeën to enforce it, did not entirely ſucceed, oweing, chiefly, it may be, to the ſtupidity of the Saxon peaſants.\* From

\* It would, no doubt, have been a glorious matter for a conquer'd and enſlave'd people to boaſt, that, after they had loſt the ſucceſſion of their native ſovereigns, their laws, their poſſeſſions, their eſtates and property, and every thing, in ſhort, that was really valuable, they were permitted to preſerve their language, and continue a meagre, and barren jargon, which was incapable of diſchargeing its functions; this, in fact, was the only meaſure of the Norman tyrants which was adapted to the benefit of their conquer'd ſubjects; and in this alone they were unſucceſſful; neither, on the contrary, did the Saxon commonalty retain their primitive tongue: they got, indeed, a barbarous mixture of Saxon, Daniſh, Norman, and one knows not what, which was no more Saxon than French, and is now known by the name of Engleiſh, a term formerly ſynonymous with Saxon.

Hearne, indeed, contends that “ the introduction of the French tongue was of very great diſadvantage. It brought a diſuſe,” he ſays, “ of the ſcriptures, which having been tranſlated into Saxon, were commonly read among the vulgar, 'till after the Normans came among us, who did all they could poſſibly to deſtroy every thing that look'd like Saxon; and yet they were not able to bring their ill deſign to perfection.”

the time of this conquest, the king, and the nobility, and the bishops, and most of the regular clergy, and every man, in short, of landed property, the whole kingdom having been parcel'd out in knights fees, under the feudal law, which was now, for the first time, introduce'd into the country, were Normans, and spoke the French, so that, long before his death, and ever afterward, we do not once meet with the name of one single Saxon nobleman, nor is there a single family now flourishing, however high in rank and opulence, that can prove a descent from the Saxon times, by authentick documents; all were ruin'd, exile'd, decapitate'd, or reduce'd to poverty, wretchedness, and distress: so that, in fact, like the Picts, they seem to have been cut off, all at once, by a single blow, without any progeny being left to represent them. "At length," says Ingulph, the Normans "so abominate'd the Engleish, that, whensoever they excel'd in merit, they were driveën from their dignities, and much less able foreigners, of whatsoever other nation which is under heaven they were, would be takeën willingly. The very idiom, even, they so much abhor'd, that the laws of the land, and the statutes of the

(Preface to Langtoft, P. xxix.) The loss sustain'd by the vulgar of their Saxon version, would have been effectually remedy'd by the Latin vulgate, which the priests continu'd to explain to them in their vernacular idiom (for, in fact, there was no French translation of the bible); and the reading of it might have contribute'd to the knowledge of the Latin tongue.

Engleish kings, were treated in the French language:\* and to boys, also, in schools, the grammatical principles of letters were deliver'd in French, and not in Engleish; the Engleish mode, also, of

\* The onely laws promulgateed by the conquerour in Norman-French, are those that were found in a single MS. of Ingulph, now destroy'd, (a blank space being left in other copys for their insertion,) and have been printed by Selden, in Fulmans edition, and by Wilkins in *LL. Saxonica*. If these laws be genuine, a fact which is not intended to be disturb'd, they must have been proclaim'd, one would think, in the Saxon language, being the old laws of the kings cousin Edward, as he says, and intended for the benefit of his newly acquire'd Saxon subjects; and this Norman version must be a work of lateer times, by some monk, who prefer'd to get them translateed for him by another who understood the Saxon tongue, supposing him not to have done it for himself. But it seems, evident that the copyist of the MS. use'd by sir Henry Savile, had been unable to write the Saxon character, and, therefor, oblig'd to leave a blank, and a Norman monk, after Ingulphs death, would naturally prefer his native tongue. These laws, no doubt, afford a very ancient specimen of the Norman-French; but it is the height of absurdity to imagine that he would have restore'd them to his Saxon-subjects, in a language they did not understand: particularly, as we find in Wilkins (P. 230), that on other occasions, he had no objection to make use of their own idiom. The laws in Latin, which immediately follow the above, are, like many others, a manifest forgery. There are, in fact, several charters of the conquerour, in the Saxon language, stil extant: though the vulgar Engleish, at that period, seems to have been essentially different. William of Malmesbury, relateing the death of Aldred, archbishop of York, who succeeded in 1060, and dye'd in 1069, says, that the frankness of his mind shone very clear in one expression, which, he ads, "i wil give in Engleish, bycause Latin words do not answer, like the Engleish to the rime." One Urfus, who had been appointed, by the king, sherif of Worcester, haveing, in the

writing was omitted, and the French mode adopted, in all charters and books.”\*

Henry of Huntingdon, relating the death of William the conquerour, says, that, “now the Normans had accomplish’d the just wil of the lord over the nation of the Engles; nor was there scarce any chief of the progeny of the Engles in Engleland, but all were reduce’d to slavery and sorrow: so that it was a disgrace to be call’d an Engleishman.†

“Engleland,” in the words of William of Malmesbury, contemporary with Henry the archdeacon, “is made the habitation of strangers, and the dominion of aliens. No Engleishman,” he says, “at this day, is either duke,‡ or bishop, or abbot. The

erection of his castle, committed a nuisance to the monks, and their complaint being brought before the archbishop, as patron of that see, he, as soon as he saw the sheriff, attack’d him with these words:

“Hatest thou§ Urse?

Have thou gods curse!”

which is, certainly, the most ancient and authentick vestige of the Engleish tongue, not being pure Saxon, that we are able to recover. (*De gestis pontificum*, L. 3, P. 271.)

\* 901. Robert Holcot, as quote’d by Selden, in his notes to Eadmer, says, that the conquerour “deliberate’d how he might destroy the Saxon language, and accord Engleland and Normandy in idiom.”

† 370.

‡ In the original *dur*, but there was no *duke* in this kingdom before the eleventh year of king Edward the third, when he create’d his eldest son duke of Cornwall. Ancient writers

§ i. e. Do’st thou call thyself.

new-comeërs every where eat up the riches and bowels of Engleland.”\*

Robert of Gloucester, in his rude provincial rimes, says of this king William :

“ He yef londes in Engelond that lyghtlyche  
cam therto,

That yut her eyrs holdest a londe mony on ;  
And deferyted mony kundemen, that he hulde  
his fon ;

So that the meste del of hey men that in  
Engelond beth,

Beth ycome of the Normans, as ye nou yn  
feth :

And men of relygion of Normandye also ;  
So that vewe contreyes beth in Engelonde,  
That monckes nabbeth of Normandye som-  
thyng in her honde.”†

John Rous, who though not an ancient authour, may have been acquainted with the work of one, remarks, that “ From the conquest the Engleish were every where trod under-foot, and, for a trivial offence, or none at all, most cruelly afflicted ; and, at the begining of Henry the first, the Engleish were held in the greatest detestation.”‡ William, the onely son of this Henry, who was drown’d in the chanel, had boasted that, if ever he should receive

use *dux* and *comes* indifferently. Geoffrey Plantagenet *duke* of Britany, is as frequently called *earl*.

\* 459.

† 368.

‡ 138.



dominion over the Engles, he would make them draw the plough like oxen.\*

After this, how strange and weak a thing it was that so great a man as sir Henry Spelman, should, for the sake of a pityful, forensick, quibble, maintain that the name of *conquestor*, assume'd by, or bestow'd upon, William duke of Normandy, who routed the Saxon army in a pitch'd battle, and slew their native king, signifys, not *conquerour*, in historical language, but *acquisitor*, or *purchaser*, in the feudal jargon: forgetting, or contemning not onely the old historians, but even the old Leonine: "*Gulielmus rex Anglorum, bello conquestor eorum.*"

It was stil more weak and puerile in sir William Blackstone, in a more enlighten'd age, to adopt such a groundless idea; though naturally enough to be expected from an ignorant reviewer.

"At more than a century after the conquest," it is suppose'd, "both the Norman and English languages would be heard in the houses of the great; so that, probably, about this æra, or soon after, we are to date that remarkable intercommunity and exchange of each others compositions, which we discover to have taken place at some early period between the French and English minstrels: the same set of phrases, the same species of characters, incidents, and adventures, and often the same identical stories being found in the old metrical romances of both

\* T. Walsingham, 444; H. de Knyghton, 23, 82; the latter cites W. of Malmesbury.



nations.”\* This, though it could not, possibly, take place at so early a period, nor more than a century after, is, by no means, to be wonder’d at, as the Engleish minstrels, being far inferior, in genius and invention, to the French or Norman *trouweres*, were oblig’d to content themselves with translateing what had allready become celebrate’d, and they were unable to emulate. It is, at the same time, a gross misrepresentation and imposition, however confidently, or plausibly, aserted or insinuate’d, that any one Engleish minstrel-romance was ever translate’d into French.

That William the bastard, his son Rufus, his daughter Maud, or his nephew Stephen, did, or could, speak the Anglo-Saxon or Engleish language we have no information. The Saxon chronicle ended in the last of these reigns, but, being imperfect toward the conclusion, it is not certainly known how low it was actually brought; and still less at what age it commence’d. King Henry the second, in his progress to Wales, was address’d by a singular character “*in Teutonica lingua*,” very good Engleish, it would seem, and, it may be also, very good German, at least for the time: the three first words of the speech deliver’d (all that is given in that language) being “Gode olde kinge!” The king himself speaks French.†

In this reign, it is most probable, Layamon, the priest, made his translation, in the stile of Saxon

\* *Essay on the ancient minstrels*, xxxii. † J. Brompton, 1079.

poetry without rime, from the *Brut* of *maistre* Wace; which affords a strange and singular mixture of the Saxon and Norman idioms, both apparently much corrupted. This curious work exhibits the progress of the English language, properly so call'd, as we now have it, in its dawn or infancy, if one may use such an expression.

The change of Saxon into English, however, was, probably, still more rapid, as the Saxon chronicle terminate'd in the reign of king Stephen, who dye'd in 1154, and, in FIFTEEN years after, we have English rimes by St. Godric, a hermit at Finchal, who dye'd in 1170; though, it must be confess'd, there are specimens, of a lateër period, in prose.

According to William of Malmesbury, in the time of king Henry the first, the whole language of the Northumbrians, and most of all in York, creek'd so rudely, that they of the south could understand nothing of it: which hapen'd on account of the vicinity of barbarous nations,\* and the remoteness of the kings, formerly English, then Norman, "who are known" he says, "to sojourn more to the south than to the north.†

Girald Barry, too, who resided frequently at the court of king Henry the second, says of the vulgar English idiom of his own time; "As in the southern borders of Engleland, and especially about Devonshire, the English language seems, at this day, rather

\* 258.

† The Picts and the Scots.

discompose'd, it, nevertheless, scenting far more of antiquity (the northern parts by the frequent irruptions of the Danes and Norwegians, being greatly corrupted), observes more the propriety, and ancient mode, of speaking: of which, also, not argument only, but, likewise, certainty you may have, that all the English books of Bede, Rabanus, king Alfred, or others whomsoever, you will find written under the propriety of this idiom.\* This seems to describe the Saxon, into which Alfred translated Bede's ecclesiastical history, and many other Latin books.

"This apayring of the birthe tonge," says Higden, "is by cause of tweye thinges: oon is for children in scole, ayenes the usage and maner of alle other naceouns, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lesfouns and her thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentilmennes children beth ytaught for to speke Frensche, from the tyme that they beth rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a childes brooche. And uplondishmen wole likne hemself to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of."† Trevisa, the translator, in his addition to this passage, allows that though "This maner was mych

\* Girald, *Cambriæ descriptio*, C. 6. He means pure Saxon, and not the jargon of his own time.

† Tyrwhitts *Chaucer*, IV, 22.

yused to fore the first moreyn," it was " fiththe som del ychaunged. So that now", he says, " the yere of our lord a thousand thre hundrd four score and fyve, in all the gramer scoles of Englonde, children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch."\*

King Richard is never known to have utter'd a single English word, unless one may rely on the evidence of Robert Mannyng for the express words, when of Isaac king of Cyprus, " O dele," said the king, " this is a sole Breton." The latter expression seems proverbial, whether it allude to the Welsh, or to the Armoricans; because Isaac was neither by birth, though he might be both by folly. Many great nobles of Engleland, in this century, were utterly ignorant of the English language; a remarkable instance is relateed by Brompton of William bishop of Ely, chancellor, chief justiciary, and prime-minister, to Richard, and, certainly, at one time, the greatest, at another, the least, in the kingdom, who did not know a word of it.†

\* Tyrwhitts *Chaucer*, IV, 23.

† A specimen of English poetry, apparently, of the same age, is preserve'd by Benedict abbot of Peterborough (622), Roger de Hoveden (678), and in the manuscript chronicle of Lanercost: " In this year (1190)," says the former, " was fulfil'd that prophecy, which, of old was found writen in stone-tables, near the town of the king of Engleland, which is call'd Here; which Henry [the second], king of Engleland, had givēn to Randal [r. William] Fitz-Stephen, in which the same Randal [William] built a new house, in the pinnacle

“ Our nation,” say king Johns embasfadours, to king Admiral of Morocco, “ is learn’d in three idioms, that is to say, *Latin, French, and Engleish.*” \* There is no specimen of the Engleish language in this reign. It must, however, have been making its progress, as in the reign of his son and successor, Henry the third, we find it, to a certain degree, mature and perfect. This, if we take the year 1188, the penultimate of Henry the second, when the work of Layamon may be thought to have been finish’d (the manuscript itself being of a not much lateër date), and the year 1278,† when Robert of Gloucester completeëd his rimeing chronicle, no more than a single century, you find an entirely different appearance, with a considerable degree of rough energy, and a tolerably smooth,

whereof he place’d the effigy of a hart, which is believe’d to have been done, that this prophecy might be fulfil’d, in which it is say’d :

“ Whan thu sees in Here hert yreret ;  
 Than fulen Engles in three be ydeled.  
 That an into Yrland al to late waie,  
 That other into Puille mid prude bileve,  
 The thridde into Airhahen herd all wreken drechegeen.”

As the inscription was set up when the house was built, before the death of Henry the second, in 1189, it may be regarded as a very ancient and singular specimen of the Engleish language, which had not yet, it would seem, at least universally adopted rime to what it call’d poetry ; though the example of St. Godric, allready mention’d, wil serve to prove that it was not altogether disuse’d even at so early a period. (See *Bibliotheca poetica*, 1802.)

\* M. Paris, 204.

and accurate, metre, for the time, though it is generally thought to be conceive'd in a provincial dialect, and, in that case, may afford a far from favourable specimen of the Engleish, even at that time.

The king of Engleland stil adhere'd to the Norman French, as far as one may rely upon Robert of Brunne, a good evidence in general, and who had the opportunity, in this instance, of knowing his authours precise meaning, they residing onely at a short distance from each other :

“ The kyng said on hie, “ *Symon, jco vous desie !*” We never know him to speak a word of Engleish. The last long expiring efforts of the Saxon language were made in the forty-third year of this reign (1258-9), in the shape of a writ to his subjects in Huntingdonshire, and, as it is there say'd, to every other in the kingdom, in support of the Oxford provisions. Certain it is, that this once famous language had allready become obsolete, and utterly incapable of dischargeing its functions, being no longer either writen or spokeen : and “ ‘ There,” as the worthy lord Balcarras exprefs'd himself, at the close of his final speech, on the dissolution of the Scottish parliament, “ is the end of an auld sang.”

King Edward the first generally, or, according to Andrew of Wyntown,\* constantly, spoke the French language, both in the council and in the field, many

\* See II, 46, 76, 83, 97.



of his sayings in that idiom being recorded by our old historians. When, in the council at Norham, in 1291-2, Anthony Beck had, as it is say'd, prove'd to the king, by reason and eloquence, that Brus was too dangerous a neighbour to be king of Scotland, his majesty reply'd, "*Par le sang de dieu vouz aves bien eschanté;*" and, accordingly, adjudge'd the crown to Baillol; of whom, refusing to obey his summons, he afterward say'd, "*A ce fol felon tel folie fais! S'il ne voult venir a nous, nous viendrons a lui.*"\*

There is but one instance of his speaking Engleish; which was when the great sultan sent embasadours, after his asfasination, to protest that he had no knowlege of it. These, standing at a distance, adore'd the king, prone on the ground; and Edward say'd in Engleish ("*in Anglico*"), "You, indeed, adore, but you little love, me:" nor understood they his words, because they spoke to him by an interpreter.†

King Edward the second, likewise, who marry'd a French princess, use'd, himself, the French tongue, Sir Henry Spelman had a manuscript, in which was a piece of poetry intitle'd, "*De le roi Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qu'il fist mesmes;*" which lord Orford was unacquainted with. His son, Edward the third, allways wrote his letters, or dispatches, in French, as we find them preserve'd by

\* *Scoti chronicon*, II, 147, 156.

† Hemingford (*Gale*), 591.



Robert of Avesbury ; and, in the early part of his reign (1328), even the Oxford scholars were confin'd in conversation to Latin or French.\* That speech, however, soon afterward began to decline. In the 36th year of his reign (1362) an act was made, the preamble whereof states " For this that it is oftentimes shew'd to the king, by the prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commonalty, the great mischiefs which are come to many of the realm, for this that the laws, customs, and statutes, of the realm are not commonly known in the same realm, because that they are pleaded, shewn, and judge'd, in the French language which is too much unknown in the say'd realm, so that the persons who plead, or are impleaded, in the courts of the king, and the courts of others have not understanding, nor knowlege, of that which is say'd for them, nor against them, by their serjeants, and other pleaders, &c. ordains that all pleas, which shal be to plead in his courts, be pleaded in the *English language*, and that they be enter'd and inroll'd in *Latin*:" which was not much better understood, it is presume'd, by the suitors, than the *French*.

This famous statute, at the same time, is itself in French, which, in fact, continue'd in use til the time of king Richard the third; and, if the serjeants and lawyers cease'd to plead in that tongue, they, certainly, continue'd to write their year books, reports, abridgements, and summaries, in the same,

\* Warton, I, 6, n. 6.

even so late as the last century, in which chief baron Comyns compile'd his *Digest*. It, likewise, continu'd to be use'd in the mootings of the ins of court til a stil lateër period, though it was, certainly, punishable to pronounce it properly.\*

There is a single instance preserve'd of this monarchs use of the Engleish language. He appear'd, in 1349, in a tournament at Canterbury, with a white swan for his imprefs, and the following motto embroider'd on his shield :

“ Hay, hay, the wythe swan !

By gódes foul, i am thy man.”†

Lewis Beaumont, bilhop of Durham, 1317, understood not a word of either Latin or Engleish. In reading the bul of his appointment, which he had been taught to spel for several days before, he stumble'd upon the word *metropolitice*, which he in vain endeavour'd to pronounce; and, haveing hammer'd over it a considerable time, at last cry'd out, in his mother-tongue : “ *Seit pour dite ! Par seynt Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis qui ceste parole ici escrit.*”‡

\* Barringtons *Observations on the statutes*, 63, n. [u]

† See Wartons *History of E. poetry*, I, 251. He had another, “ It is as it is ;” and may have had a third, “ Ha St. Edward ! Ha St. George !”

‡ Robert de Gray stanes, *Anglia sacra*, I, 761. “ Take it as say'd ! By St. Lewis, he was not very civil who wrote this word here.” The country schoolmasters, in certain small villageës of the north, have recourse to a similar evasion, when any of their little pupils are stagger'd at a difficult word : “ It is a *youth*,” says Holofernes ; “ pass it over.”

Gower wrote much more in French and Latin than in English; his *Speculum meditantis* is in the first of those languages; his *Vox clamantis* in the second, and his *Confessio amantis*, though in the third, a manifest version from both. He even inserts pure French words in his English poetry; for instance:

To ben upon his *bien venu*,  
The first, whiche shall him *salu*."

Fo. 35, b.

"The dare not drede *tant ne quant*:"

Fo. 41, &c. &c.

This, too, was the case with Chaucer, though disputeed by mister Tyrwhitt,\* who, however, allows, in another place that "our poets (who have, generally, the principal share in modeling a language) found it there interest to borrow as many words as they, conveniently, could from France, &c. &c.:" which is, certainly, as true of Chaucer; as of Gower, or any other poet; more especially in their translations, where, from a want of words, they take the French as they find it. A striking proof of this fact, in the case of both Gower and Chaucer, is, that they adopted the mode of French poetry, which ends one subject, or sentence, with half the rime, and, begins a new one with the other half; which few, if any other English poets are, at least constantly, known to do. Nothing is more plausible than Wartons opinion that Chaucer

\* See his edition of *The Canterbury tales*, IV, 1, &c. 45.

imitateëd the Provençal poets; *his dreme*, *The flower and the leaf*, *The assemblée of ladies*, *The house of Fame*, and, it may be, others, are very much in the manner of the *troubadours*; even the *Roman de la rose* is, apparently, an imitation of this kind; which, peradventure, might rather set him upon the translation. At any rate, the English language, such as it is, or is esteem'd to be, was by these means greatly enlarge'd, as wel as improve'd, in this reign, particularly by those two poets, not forgetting Robert of Brunne, to whom Warton has done great injustice, and Lawrence Minot, whose merit he was a stranger to.

The first instance, of the English language, which mister Tyrwhitt had discover'd, in the parliamentary proceedings, was the confession of Thomas duke of Gloucester, in 1398.\* He might, however, have met with a petition of the mercers of London, ten years earlier.† The oldest English instrument, produce'd by Rymer, is dateëd 1368;‡ but an indenture in the same idiom, betwixt the abbot and convent of Whitby, and Robert the son of John Bustard, dateëd at York, in 1343,§ is the earliest known: the date of 1324, giveen in Whatleys translation of Rapins *Acta regia* (volume I, page 394) being either a falsification, or a blunder, for 1384, as appears by the *Fædera*, whence it was takeen.

\* IV, 25.

† *Rot. parl.* III. 225.

‡ VII, 526.

§ Charltons *History of Whitby*, 247,

There is every reason, indeed, to believe that the English language, before the invention of printing, was held, by learned, or literary, men, in very little esteem. In the library of Glastonbury-abbey, which bids fair to have been one of the most extensive in the kingdom, in 1248, there were but four books in English, and those upon religious subjects, all, beside, "*vetusta & inutilia*."\* We have not a single historian, in English prose, before the reign of Richard the second, when John Trevisa translated the *Polychronicon* of Randal Higden. Boston of Bury, who seems to have consulted all the monasterys in Engleland, does not mention one author who had written in English; and Bale, at a lateer period, has, comparatively, but an insignificant number: nor was Leland so fortunate as to find above two or three English books, in the monastick and other librarys, which he rummage'd, and explore'd, under the kings commision. Gower, indeed, wrote wel, in all three languageës: *Latin*, *French*, and English; and there is sufficient reason to think that Chaucer, though he prefer'd his native tongue, was wel acquainted not onely with the other two, but with the *Italian*, allso, which was, at that time, little cultivateed in his mother-country.

\* John of Glastonbury, 435.

## § 3. ROMANCEËS.

No romanceës are to be expected among the Britons, at the time they possess'd the whole, or the greater part, of Britain, of which æra the present Welsh are unable to produce the slightest literary vestige. They pretend, indeed, to have the poems of several bards of the sixth century; but they have no fabulous adventures, or tales, in verse, of any age; and onely a few, chiefly translations, heretofore specify'd, none of which can be prove'd antierior to the thirteenth century.

"The Saxons, of whose learning or literature some account has been, already, giveen, as wel as some idea of their poetry, being, for the most part, an ignorant and illiterate people, it wil be in vain to hope for proofs, among them, of genius, or original composition, at least, in their native tongue. In consequence, no romance has been yet discover'd in Saxon, but a prose translation already notice'd. So that if, as Warton pretends, the flourishing of "the tales of the Scandinavian scalds among the Saxons," may be justly presume'd, it is certain they had been soon lost, as neither vestige nor notice is preserve'd of them in any ancient writeër; nor, in fact, would any but a stupid fool, or rank impostor, imagine that any of these supposititious Scandinavian tales existed in the middle of the fifth century, when the Saxons first establish'd themselves in



Britain. He pretends, likewise, that "they imported with them into Engleland the old Runick language and letters;" but whatever vestigeës of either exist in the northern parts of the kingdom are by more learned writeërs attributeëd to the Danes.\*

The most ancient romance now extant in the Engleish language, if it may be so call'd, being a strange, and apparently corrupt, mixture of Saxon and Norman, in the stile of the Saxon poetry, without rime, is a sort of licentious version, by one Layamon, a priest, at Ernlye upon Severne, with great probability about the time of Henry II. or Richard I. the manuscript itself being not lateër than the commencement, or, at least, the earlier part of the thirteenth century; chiefly, it seems, from the *Brut* of *maistre* Wace, Gace, or Gasse, which was itself, in some measure, a translation from Geoffrey of Monmouths *British history*, and was finish'd in 1155. A curious specimen of this singular production may be red to great advantage in the elegant "Specimens of early English poetry," publish'd by George Ellis esquire.† The original is in the Cotton-library (Claudius. A. IX): in which invaluable collection was formerly a lateër, and modernise'd, copy (Otho, C. XIII); unfortunately destroy'd in the dreadful fire which hapen'd, in that invaluable repository, 1731. A specimen of it,

\* I, c 2, b. The Runick characters exhibit proofs of Christianity, and must, consequently, be very late, and are, probably, forge'd.

† See I, 61.

however, is luckily preserve'd in Wanleys catalogue of Saxon MSS.

Our king Richard the first, in the first, as we are told by Du Verdier, frequented the court of Raymond Berenger, or Berenguier, count of Provence, the last of that name, and there fell in love with Leonore, or Helyonne, one of the four daughters of that count, whom he, afterward, marry'd; this princess sent him "*un beau romant, en rime Provençalle, des amours de Blandin de Cornaille & de Guilhen de Myremas, des beaux faicts d'armes qu'ils firent l'un pour la belle Bryande, & l'autre pour la belle Irlande, dames d'incomparable beauté.*"\* unfortunately now lost.

He had either a servant, or a friend, name'd Blondel de Nefle, who was a minstrel, and discover'd the king, in the imperial prison, by singing under his window the half of a Provençal song of his own composition, and, pauseing, the royal prisoner

\* *Bibliothèque*, 1221; Nostredame, *Les vies des poètes Provençaux*, 1575, P. 140. Crescimbeni (II, 8) tells the same story, and adds that the king, when prisoner, compos'd sonnets, which he sent to Beatrix, the sister of this Leonora. It is well known, however, that he actually marry'd Berengaria daughter of Sancho king of Navarre; though some love-affair, between him and one of the princesses of Provence, may nevertheless have taken place. It may be observ'd, at the same time, that Richard earl of Cornwall, king of the Romans, brother to Henry III. actually marry'd Sanchia, daughter of Raymond earl of Provence, and that he is, occasionally, confounded by foreign writers with Richard I. Another daughter of Raymond was marry'd to Henry III.

sung the other; which certify'd Blondel where he was confine'd, and enable'd his subjects to obtain his ransom. The song is stil extant. This gallant monarch, himself a celebrate'd poet, as wel in Norman, as in Provençal, was the subject of several romanceës. Leland found the "*Historia de Ricardo rege, carmine scripta*," in the library of Croyland-abbey;\* and in that of the abbey of Glastonbury, in 1248, were the "*Gesta Ricardi*" register'd. † Both these, no doubt, were a romance, or two different romanceës, in the French language. A copy of the same poem, or some other on the same subject, is in the library of Turin; and in the national library at Paris (formerly the *Bibliothèque du roi*, 7532), is the "*Histoire de Richard roi d'Angleterre & de Maquemore d'Irlande, en rime*," fo. This Maquemore is Dermond Mac Morough, king of Leinster, who, haveing ravish'd the wife of O'Rory, king of Lethcoin, daughter of Melaghlin Mac Colman, king of Leinster, and being, on that account, attack'd by Roderick o'Conor, king of Connaught, implore'd, and obtain'd, the assistance of king Henry II. which procure'd, to him and his successours, the dominion of Ireland.† Ducange, also, cites the "*Histoire de la mort Richard roy*

\* Col. III, 30.

† See, in Harris's *Hibernica*, what may, with great probability, be an abridgment of a fragment of this identical poem: but why king Richard is introduce'd does not appear.

*d'Angleterre*," meaning, it is presume'd, this Richard surname'd *Cœur-de-lion*.

"Kyng Rycharde cuer du Lyon," was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1528, in quarto, and black letter; and, according to mister Warton, an edition, by the same printer, in 1509 (CR. 734. 8vo.) "This," he says, "was in the Harleian library;" but unless there were an edition beside Num. 5933, he is probablyly mistakeen. He, likewise, mentions a third, "Impr. for W. C. 4to." Among the "Englysshe boks off [sir] John Paston" was "Kyng Ri cur de lyon."\* The MS. copys of the Engleish romance, doubtless a translation from the French, contain many variations. One of these is in the library of Caius-college, Cambridge (D. 18); another doctor Farmer had (imperfect); the fragment of a third is in the Harleian collection (Num. 4690), in the British museum; and another in the Auchinleck MS. in the advocates-library, Edinburgh. "The victorious atchievements of that monarch," according to Warton, "were so famous in the reign of Henry the *second*, as to be made the subject of a picture [*duellum regis Ricardi*], in the royal palace of Clarendon" (1246,\* in the time of Henry the *third*).

No romance, in Engleish rime, has been hitherto discover'd, or mention'd to exist, before the reign of Edward the first, toward the end of which, as we

\* *Original letters*, &c. II, 300.

† I, 114.

may fairly conjecture, that of *Horn child*, a very concise and licentious translation, or imitation, and abridgement, rather, of the French original, nearly two centuries older, made its first appearance. There is every reason to conclude that the other romances mention'd by Chaucer *Ypotys*, *Bevis*, *Sir Guy*, *Sir Lybeaus*, *Pleindamour*, and, possibly, *Sire Percivell*, were in English verse, and, in all probability, much the same with those of which copys have been preserve'd; except the last, which no one but Chaucer ever noticeës. This sort of translation continue'd til at least the time of king Henry the sixth; in which reign *The St. Graal* was translate'd into English by Henry Lonelich, skynner, at the instance of one Harry Barton,\* and contains, though imperfect both at begining and end, not less, according to mister Nasmith, than 40,000 lines; Thomas Chestre gave a free and enlarge'd version of the *Lai de Lanval* of Mary of France; and Robert de Thornton produce'd *Morte Arthure* and *Percyvell of Galles*. *Ywain and Gawin* seems to have been writen at an earlier period, and, very probably, in the reign of king Richard the second. There are not above two or three originally English, among which we may safely reckon *The squyr of low degree*; unless *Sir Eglamour*, and *Sir Tryamour*, may, likewise, have that honour, til the originals be discover'd.

It appears highly probable that the "rime" men-

\* See his *Catalogus lib. C. C. C. C.* P. 54.

tion'd by Robert of Brunne,\* concerning Gryme the fisher, the founder of Grymesby, Hanelok the Dane, and his wife Goldeburgh, daughter to a king Athelwold; "who all now," exclaims the learned Tyrwhitt, "together with their bard,

—— *illacrymabiles*

*Urgentur ignotique longa*

*Nocte,—*"

was an Engleish romance, extant not onely in the time of Henry de Knyghton, the historian, who wrote about the year 1400,† but, also, in that of Camden,‡ and even made use of by Warner, who, in the twentyeth chapter of his *Albions England*, has told the same story, in effect, though in a different manner, under the names of *Argentile* and *Curan*, in exquisite poetry. Whether this poem were originally compose'd in Engleish, or were no more than a translation from the French, cannot be now ascertain'd, as it seems to be utterly destroy'd: but in a part of a French metrical romance, upon the history of Engleland, by Geoffrey Gaimar, a poet anterior to *maistre* Wace, to whose poem of *Le Brut* (though unfortunately mutilateëd) it serves as a continuation, in a manuscript of the kings library, in the British museum, (13 A XXI), the story itself is certainly preserve'd, though whether written originally by Geoffrey, or takeen from some one of the "*liveres Engleis, en romanz e en Latin,*" of

\* Translation of Langefoft, 25. † Co. 2320.

‡ *Britannia*, 569, or Gibsons edition, 1695, 471.



which he had purchase'd many a copy, before he could draw his work to the end; particularly a book, which, at the instance of the gentle dame Constance Fitz-Gilbert, Robert earl of Gloucester, who dyed in 1147,\* and was sent for it to Helmsley, brought it away for him from Walter Espec, who was dead in 1140; or the Engleish book of Washingburgh, in Lincolnshire, or how otherwise, does not appear. It is, however, a great curiosity, though too imperfect, as wel as too prolix, to insert here. In the mean time the paraphrase may be peruse'd, with great pleasure, and equal delicacy, in Warners book allready mention'd.

Robert of Brunne alludes to a romance of *Dan Waryn*, which was, probably, of this period, and, being both in French and Engleish, appears to have been highly popular, and, from the extracts preserve'd of it, a very singular and curious composition of extraordinary merit. The passage is as follows:

“ —Wele i underitonde, that the kyng Robyn†  
 Has dronken of that blode the drink of Dan Waryn.  
 Dan Waryn he les tounes that he held,  
 With wrong he mad a res, and misberyng of scheld.  
 Sithen in to the forest he yede naked and wode,  
 Als a wilde beste, ete of the gres that stode:  
 Thus of Dan Waryn in his boke men rede.” ‡

\* See the annals of Waverley, a house of his own foundation.

† Robert de Brus, king of Scotland. ‡ P. 335.

In Lelands *Collectanea* (I, 230), are “ Things excerptid [by himself] out of an old Englisch boke, yn ryme, of the gestes of Guarine, and his sunnes.” The story commence’d, it seems, with the time of William the conquerour, and the extracts are exceedingly interesting. Fulco, the real hero of the romance, by Leland call’d “ Fulco the secunde,” was one of the four sons of Fulco *primus*, son of Guarine, or Waryn, who appears to have been a lord-marcher, on the borders of Wales, as his son and grandson were after him, the latter being appointed by Richard I. “ John, sun to king Henry,” it is say’d, “ and Fulco [the elder] felle at variance at chestes, and John brake Fulco hed with the chest-borde; and then Fulco gave him such a blow, that he had almost killid hym.”\* “ Morice,” it seems, “ sunne to Roger, that had Whittington-castel gyven him by the prince of Wales, was made governor of the Marchis by king John, that yn nowise lovid Fulco Guarin. Moryce desire’d to have the title of Whittington confermed to hym by the brode seale of king John, to whom he sent a curfore welle trappid to Balduines castel, and obtainid his purpose.” Upon this, “ Fulco and his brethern, with Balduine, desired justes of king John for

\* The like circumstance occurs in *Galyen le rethoré*, *Ogier le Dannoys*, and *Les quatre filz Aymon*: Galyen receives a blow on the head from his uncles chefs-board, which draws blood; Baldwin, Ogiers bastard-son, had his head broke, and was kil’d, by Charlot, son of Charlemagne, and Berthelot, his nephew, experiencees the same fate from Reynaud.

Whittington; but he could have no gratus answer. Wherefore he, and his bretherne, forsakid their homage to king John, and went from Winchester." They afterward "laid wait for Morice as he went toward Salisbury; and Fulco ther woundid hym: and Bracy cut of Morice heed." The whole of his adventures are too numerous to repeat: but one, which deserves to be notice'd, is, that "Fulco resortid to one John of Raumpayne, a *sothfayer*, and *jocular*, and made him his spy to Morice at Whittington. He founde the meanes to caste them that kept Bracy" (who, being fore wounded, had been taken and brought by Audelegh to king John), "into a deadely slepe, and so he and Bracy cam to Fulco to Whittington." Leland, haveing stateed that "Fulco was taken by the soldan [in Barbary], and brought onto him," says "Here lakkid a quayre or ii in the olde Englishe booke of the nobile actes of the Guarines: and these thinges that folow i translated owte of an olde French historie yn rime of the actes of the Guarines onto the death of Fulco the 2." The popularity of the French or Engleish poem (the former being, indisputablely, the original) had cause'd some one to reduce, or epitomise, the story into French prose; and a fragment of this manuscript, apparently of the age of Edward the second, is fortunately preserve'd in the Kings library (12 C XII), where the anecdote allready mention'd from Lelands extracts will be hereafter relateed.

The two most famous, if not the most ancient, Engleish metrical romanceës, now existing, are those

of *Guy of Warwick*, and *Bevis of Southampton*. Walter of Exeter, according to Bale (*Ex bibliothecis*, from the bookfellers shops), a native of Devonshire, and profesor of a sect of beging friers (a Dominican, as he thinks), at the instance of one Baldwin, a citizen of Exeter, in the year 1301, residing at St. Carrock in Cornwall, wrote the life of Guy, formerly a famous earl of Warwick, in one book: but Bale is a very dubious authority. At any rate no such work is now extant; though Carew, as if he had had it in his library, says, that this Walter “(de-) formed the historie of Guy of Warwick.” Hearnè, in his appendix to the *Annales de Dunstaple*, has inserted “*Girardi Cornubiensis Historia Guidonis de Warwyke*” from an old MS. in the library of Magdalen-college Oxford. n. 147. This authour, however, is supposititious, and the MS. in all probability, no older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century: Lydgate translateed from him. Guy of Warwick is mention’d by no English historian before Robert of Brunne, or Peter de Langtoft, about 1340.\* His story, at the same time, is relateed in the *Gesta Romanorum*, C. 172; “and, probably,” as Warton thinks, “this is the early outline of the life of that renowned [but ideal] champion;”† and, in the Harley MSS. (Num. 525) is an old English poem entitle’d “*Speculum Gy de Warewyke* per Alquinum ‘here-

\* “That was Guy of Warwik, as the boke sais,  
There he slouh Colbrant with hache Dancis.” P. 32.

† III, 66.

*mitam*,' beginning "Herkenethe alle unto my speche." The *Alquinus* here meant was *Albinus Alcuinus*, a Saxon-Engleishman, (and not, as sir James Foulis asferts, a Scotch highlander,) who was the preceptor to Charlemagne, being groundred upon his epistle *De virtutibus & vitiis ad Guidonem comitem*, here called *Guy of Warwick*. Warton relates that the *canticum Colbrondi* was sung by a jugler in the hall of Alexander prior of St. Swithin, Winchester, before Adam de Orleton, bishop of that see, in 1333: and in Bodleys MSS. Num. 1731, and 3903, is a "*Disputatio inter priorem aliquem & spiritum Guidonis*." The original French "*Romanz de Gui de Warwyk*," extant in C.C.C.C. L. 6. (formerly in the library of St. Augustines abbey, Canterbury) <sup>L</sup> in the publick library (More 690); and the Harleian, and kings MSS. 3775, and 8 F IX, is of the thirteenth century. The Engleish translation, which exists in the library of Caius-college, was first printed by William Copland, before 1567, and afterward by John Cawood, before 1571. But, in fact and truth, famous as his name is, the man himself never existed. This, likewise, is the case with sir Bevis, of whom Camden, with singular puerility, says, "At the coming-in of the Normans, one *Bogo*, or *Beavose*, a Saxon, had this title [of earl of Winchester]; who, in the battel at Cardiff in Wales, fought against the Normans." (Gibsons translation, 1695, co. 128.) For this, however, in a way too usual with him, he cites no authority; nor does any ancient or veracious historian mention either *Bogo*,



*Bevoſe*, or the battle of *Cardiff*; which, by the way, was not, as we learn from honeſt Carádóc of Lláncarvan, contemporary with Geoffrey of Monmouth, in 1138, built before 1079. His *roman*, in French, however, is of the 13th century, and was extant in the magnificent library of the duke de la Valliere; as it is at preſent in the late royal library at Turin: an Engleiſh translation was printed by Pynſon, Copland, Eaſt, and another; and three MS. copys are extant in the Publick-library, and that of Caius-college, Cambridge, and in the Auchinleck collection; Edinburgh; all three different from the printed copy, and, at leaſt, two of them from each other.

Neither Bevis nor Guý is mention'd by Dugdale in his *Baronage*, and he muſt have been conſcious that the latter's ſtory was altogether fabulous when he introduce'd it into his *History of Warwickſhire*.

“Bevis,” as we are gravely told by the hiſtorian of Engleiſh poetry, “was a Saxon chieftain, who ſeems to have extended his dominion along the ſouthern coaſts of England, which he is ſaid [by whom?] to have defended againſt the Norman invaders. He lived at Downton in Wiltſhire.” This is highly ridiculous: Bevis and Guy were no more “Engliſh heroes” than Amadis de Gaule or Perceforeſt: they are mere creatures of the imagination, and onely obtain an eſtabliſhment in hiſtory becauſe (like miſter Wartons) it was uſually written upon the authority of romance. He accounts very ingeniouſly, however, for the fable of Dugdale, that



the Saracens had the story of Guy "in books of their own language." (I, 145.)

Chaucer, who mentions these two romanceës, noticeës, likewise, *Horn-child*, *Ypotis*, *Sire Lyb*, and *Pleindamour*; none of which can, of course, be so late as the year 1380, when *The Canterbury tales* are generally suppose'd to have been publish'd; and one of them, at least, will be prove'd, in another place, to be near a century older. The last is unknown. "That of sir ISEMBRAS," likewise, according to Warton, "was familiar in the time of CHAUCER, and occurs in THE RIME OF SIR THOPAS;" actually refering in a note to "V.6." It is, however, a monstrous lye.

"The stories of Guy and Bevis, with some others, were probably the invention of English minstrels."\* There are, doubtless, metrical romanceës, such as *Eglamour*, *Triamour*, *the Squyr of lowe degree*, and, it may be, one or two more, of which no French originals are known, and, therefor, may be fairly concluded to be of Engleish invention; but it is absolutely imposible that this can be the case with *Guy*, *Bevis*, or the rest, of which these originals are extant, and no one, who will take the trouble to compare them, could have the slightest doubt upon the subject. The MS. French metrical romanceës are mostly of the 12th or 13th century, the Engleish of the 14th and 15th; obviously, therefor, they do not stand upon the same footing, and the originals

are allways superior, and, sometimes, to a very extraordinary degree.

Mister Tyrwhitt thinks it extremely probable that these romanceës [*Horn child*, *sir Guy*, and *Bevis*], though, originally, written in French, were compose'd in Engleland, and, perhap, by Engleishmen; for, says he, "we find that the general currency of the French language here engage'd several of our own countrymen to use it in their compositions. He instanceës (doubtfully) Peter of Langtoft, as he is say'd "by some to have been a Frenchman;" Robert Groffeteste, bishop of Lincoln, in the time of Henry III. a native of Suffolk, *Helis de Guincestre*, i. e. Winchester, and a romance, also, in French verse, which he suppose'd to be the original of the Engleish *Ipomedon*, by *Hue de Rotelande*; and Gower. This, indeed, may be so, but it, likewise, may be otherwise: Andrew of *Wyntown*, which, equally, implys *Winchester*, was not, therefor, an Engleishman, nor ever in Engleland.

In the year 1361 appear'd a singular allegorical and satyrical romance in alliterative metre without rime, by one Robert Langeland, as it is alledge'd, by some, without sufficient authority. It is at any rate, however, a poem of great merit.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the famous poet, who pass'd his youth, and, the greater part of his life, in the reign of Edward III. was a writeër of romanceës, though in his *Rime of sire Thopas*, he attempts to burlesque and ridicule those of his predecesfours

and contemporaries, on account of what he calls their "drafty riming." The specimen, however, completely proves how successful he would have been in a more serious exertion of his lyrical and inventive powers.\* His *Troilus and Creside* was intended to be either read, or sung, probably, in publick, or, even, in the latter case, to the harp :

"And redde where so thou be, or ellis *songe*."†

A learned and judicious gentleman is incline'd to believe that we have no English romance, prior to the age of Chaucer, which is not a translation of some earlier French one.‡ After this decisive opinion, which may be supported, if necessary, by producing the original poems, still extant in publick libraries, or private collections, as well in our own country as upon the continent, it is very strange that doctor Percy (for whose better information, it may be, the above observation of his worthy friend was intended as a gentle reprimand), should, in the last edition of his *Reliques of ancient English poetry*,

\* Doctor Hurd, now bishop of Worcester, has endeavour'd to deprive old Geoffrey of the credit of this poem. "The *Boke of The giant Olyphant, and Chylde Thopas*, WAS NOT," he asserts, "A FICTION OF HIS OWN, BUT A STORY OF ANTIQUE FANE, AND VERY CELEBRATED IN THE DAYS OF CHIVALRY." *Letters, &c.* III, 216: This, however, is no more than a usual dash of the Warburtonian school, or in the Gloucester prelates own "warm language," a lye.

† B. 5, V. 1796.

‡ Chaucer, *C.T.* IV, 68. Warton, also, has an argument to prove this, I, 38.

publish'd some years after that gentleman's death, venture to assert that *Horn-child*, which he imagines, "although from the mention of Sarazens, &c.\* it must have been written after the first crusade in 1096," a pretty moderate conjecture! "yet from its Anglo-Saxon language or which it would be somewhat difficult for any other critick to distinguish, "can scarce" he says, "be dated later than within a century after the conquest." As if this had not been sufficiently extravagant, and ill-founded, as may be easily learned from the elegant *Specimens* of mister Ellis, "It appears," he adds, "of genuine English growth, for after a careful examination, I", he says, "cannot discover any allusion to French or Norman customs, manners, composition, or phraseology;" as if such a circumstance were essential, or even observable, in a romance written by either French or Norman, where the scene is lay'd in a distant, or imaginary, country: "no quotation," he proceeds, "As the romance sayth:"† Not a name or local reference, which was

\* The learned prelate does not appear to be aware that the name of *Saracens* is use'd by the old English writers for the pagan Saxons or Danes. See the forged laws of Edward the confessor (Wilkins, 204), where Arthur is say'd to have "expelled the *Saracens* and enemys from his kingdom:" and Warburton's note on Shakspeare (V, 382). Geoffrey of Monmouth calls *Gormund*, a well known king of *Denmark*, king of the *Africans*. (B. 11, C. 8, 11.)

† In *Horn-child and maiden Rimnild*, in the Auchinleck MS. in the advocates library, a different poem, on the same

likely to occur to a French RIMEUR. The proper names are all of Northern extraction;" because the story is predicateed of the Saxon and Danes in Engleland and Ireland (though he mentions neither by that name). "So that this," he concludes, (a manuscript of the 14th century) probably is the original, from which was translate'd the old French fragment of *Dan Horn* in the Harleian MS, 527 [of, at least, a couple of centurys earlyer], mention'd by Tyrwhitt (Chaucer, IV. 68.) and by T. Warton (Hist. I. 38.) whose extract from *Horn-child* is extremely incorrect." "O most lame and impotent conclusion!" The truth of this last asser-tion will be readily admitted. "Compare," he says, "the stile of *Child-Horn* with the Anglo-Saxon specimens in short verses and rhyme, which are assigned to the century succeeding the conquest, in Hickes's *Thesaurus*, Tom. I. Cap. 24. P. 224, and 231." The comparifon, indeed, would be easely, but the result is not quite so certain. The Saxons, it is well known, had no rime, nor is there a single vestige, in *Horn-child*, of a more intimate connection with the Saxon than was common to every thing written in the Engleish language at that period, about the year 1300, that is, and not "within a century after the conquest." That the metre is

subject, and, doubtless, from the same original, the French is frequently refer'd to, as for instance:

"Thus in *loke* as we *rede*."

"In *rime* as it is told."

Norman, if the writeër were not, is manifest from a specimen giveèn by mister Ellis, from M. de la Rue, of the kind of poetry use'd by Philip de Than, which does not, as those ingenious gentlemen choose to think, consist in makeing one half [of a line, rhyme] with another half, any more than the composeër of *Horn-child* has done; but, the truth is, that every two lines, being very short, are run together, by the transcribeër, for the salvation of parchment; a practice of which the Harleian MS. (which contains the latter) affords abundant examples; many of the poems in that collection being written as prose; and, sometimes, as Warton observes, three or four verseës together in one line; of which he gives instanceës.\*

That the English acquire'd the art of romance-writing from the French seems clear and certain, as most of the specimens of that art, in the former language, are palpable and manifest translations of those in the other, and this, too, may serve to account for the origin of romance in Italy, Spain, Germany, and Scandinavia: but the French romances are too ancient to be indebted for their existence to more barbarous nations. It is, therefore, a vain and futile endeavour to seek for the origin of romance: in all ageës and all countrys, where literature has been cultivateëd, and genius and taste have inspire'd, whether in India, Persia, Greece, Italy, or France, the earliest product of

\* I, 35.



that cultivation, and that genius and taste, has been poetry and romance, with reciprocal obligations, perhaps, between one country and another. The Arabians, the Persians, the Turks, and, in short, almost every nation in the globe, abound in romances of their own invention. The *Scander namah*, or history of Alexander, by Shahnamez, about the 12th century, is a poem of considerable bulk, and much admir'd by the Persians; but has nothing in common with the European poetry on that subject. The Arabian romance of *Mejnoun and Leila*, in prose and verse, is a most beautiful specimen of the art and genius of that extraordinary people. The enumeration of those specimens which are preserv'd in the Parisian, and other great continental librarys, would be endless.

The librarys of the monasterys, according to —  
 Warton, were full of romances: but this is very doubtful.\* In that of Glastonbury, at any rate, (already mention'd as probably the largest in Engleland), we only find the four following: the *Gesta Normannorum*, the *Liber de excidio Trojæ*, the *Gesta Ricardi regis*, and the *Gesta Alexandri regis*; all which, it is most probable, were in French verse, in which they are known to exist. The catalogue was taken in 1248.† In the appendix to Darts history of the church of Canterbury is a meagre catalogue of books anciently in the monastick library; among which there are not two

\* 1, 87.      † John of Glastonbury, by Hearn, 435.

articles in either poetry, or Engleish. The monks, at the same time, appear to have made no use of their books; as Leland complain'd, when he had to shake off the dust and cobwebs of Abingdon library. In Madoxes *Formulare*, is a memorandum, or certificate, under seal, that, on such a day, in the first year of king Edward the third [1315], was found "a book, which speaks of the four principal gests, and of *Charles*; the romance [of] *Titus & Vaspasian*; the romance of *Aygrès*; the romance of *Marchauns*; the romance of *Eamund* and *Agoland*; the romance [of] *Girard de Vyeine*; the romance [of] *Willeame de Orenges*, & *Tabaud de Arable*; the boke of *Lise*; the romance of *Troy*." These were, doubtless, French metrical romanceës, but where they had come from, or to whom they belong'd, is not stated.

In a voluminous metrical version of Guido de Colonna, on the war of Troy, citèd by Warton, and, by him, erroneously attributeëd to Lydgate, the translator, in his prologue, enumerates several popular romanceës of his own time.

"Many speken of men that romances rede, &c.  
 Of *Berys*, *Gy*, and *Gawayne*,  
 Of *Kyng Rychard*, and *Owayne*,  
 Of *Tristram* and *Percyvale*,  
 Of *Rowland Ris*,† and *Aglavayle*,

\* *Titus and Vespasian*, *Girald de Vienne*, *Williame D'Orenges*, and the romance of *Troy*, are all three in the British museum.

† *Rowland Ris* is a character in the romance of *Tristrem*, by

Of *Archeroun*, and of *Octavian*,  
 Of *Charles*, and of *Casfiedlan*,  
 Of *Keveloke*,\* *Horne*, and of *Wade*,  
 In romances that ben of hem bimade,  
 That *gestours* dos of hem *gestes*,  
 At maungeres, and at great festes,  
 Her dedis ben in remembrance,  
 In many fair romance."†

All these appear to have been in English rimes, and moit of them are extant at this day.

Another extract, of the same kind, is giveen, by Warton, from the prologue to *Richard Cœur de lion* :

" Many romayns men make newe,  
 Of good knightes, and of trewe :  
 Of ther dedes men make romauns,  
 Both in *England* and in *France* ;  
 Of *Rowland* and of *Olyvere*,  
 And of every *dofepere* ;  
 Of *Alysaundre*, and *Charlemagne*,  
 Of *Kyng Arthur*, and of *Gawayne* ;  
 How they wer knyghtes good and courtoys,  
 Of *Turpin*, and of *Oger the Danois*.  
 Of *Troye* men rede in ryme,  
 Of *Hector* and of *Achilles*, &c."‡

Thomas Rymour ; doctor Percy, or the learned Scottish divine who inspected, on his account, the Auchinleck MS. has createed another champion, call'd *Rouland Louth*, from the want of apprehension, that *lough*, the identical word, meant, *laugh'd*!

\* It should be *Haveloke*. See before, P. lxxxviii.

† *History of E. poetry*, I, 119.

‡ *History of E. poetry*, I, 122. These must have been either

Again, from a second prologue :

“ Herkene now how my tale gothe,  
 Though i swere to you no othe,  
 I wyll you rede romaynes none,  
 Ne of *Partonape*, ne of *Ypomedon*,  
 Ne of *Alisaunder*, ne of *Charlemayne*.  
 Ne of *Arthur*, ne of *Gawayne*,  
 Ne of *Bevis*, ne of *Guy* [ne] of *Sydrake*,  
 Ne of *Ury*, ne of *Octavian*,  
 Ne of *Hector*, the strong man,  
 Ne of *Jafon*, neither of *Achilles*,  
 Ne of *Eneas*, neither *Hercules*.”\*

The romanceës of *Rouland*, *Olyvere*, *Gy of Warwyk*, *Wawayn*, and *Tristram*, which, says the poet, “ mochel is lesyngis,” are, likewise, mention’d in a sort of prologue to an old book of the *Lives of the saints*, written about the year 1200.†

“ The anonymous authour of an ancient manuscript poem, intitle’d, “ *The boke of stories called Curfor mundi*, “ translateëd from the French,

wholly or principally, romanceës in French metre; as *Rouland*, *Oliver*, *Charlemagne*, *Turpin*, *Oger the Dane*, *Hector*, and *Achilles*, never seem to have appear’d in Engleish verse.

\* *History of E. poetry*, I, 123. Warton, in a note, perhaps *Pertondpe* to be *Parthenope*, or *Parthenopeus*, whom, he elfewhere calls “ one of Statius’s, heroes” (II, fig. h, n. g) : but, in fact, it alludes to the romance of *Pertenopex comte de Blois*, a famous *roman de féerie* in French rime, but which never made its appearance in Engleish..

† *Ibi.* 123. See, allso, a long pasage, to the same purpose, in Skeltons works, citeëd by mister Warton in his *Observations on the Fairy queen*, II, 42.

seems, as Warton observes, to have been of the same opinion. "His work," he says, "consists of religious legends: but, in the prologue, he takes occasion to mention many tales of another kind, which were more agreeable to the generality of readers:"

"Men lykyn *jestis* for to here,  
 And *romans* rede in divers manere,  
 Of *Alexandre* the conquerour,  
 Of *Julius Cesar* the emperour,  
 Of *Greece and Troy the strong stryf*,  
 Ther many a man lost his lyf:  
 Of *Brut*, that baron bold of hand,  
 The first conquerour of Englonde,  
 Of *kyng Artour* that was so ryche:  
 Was non in hys tyme so ilyche;  
 Of wonders that among his knyghts felle,  
 And auntyrs dedyn as men her telle,  
 As *Gawcyn*, and othir full abyll,  
 Which that kept the round tabyll,  
 How *king Charles* and *Rowland* sawght,  
 With Sarazins, nold thei be cawght;  
 Of *Tristram* and *Yfoude* the swete,  
 How thei with love first gan mete.  
 Of *Kyng John*, and of *Isenbras*,  
 Of *Ydoine and Amadas*."

The fragment of a metrical romance, intituled *Le mort Arthure*, preserve'd in the Harleian MSS. Num. 2252, and of which Humphrey Wanley has

fay'd that the writeër " useth many Saxon or obsolete words ;" and doctor Percy, fancyfully and absurdly, that " it *seems* to be quoted in *Syr Bevis*," is, in fact, nothing more than part of the *Morte Arthur* of Caxton turn'd into easie alternate verse, a very unusual circumstance, no doubt, in the time of Henry the seventh, to which Wanley properly allots it.\* The antiquateëd words use'd by this verfiyer are manifestly affected. Caxtons book is the onely one known by the name of *La mort D'Arthur*, which he took as he found it.

It is no proof, because any metrical romanceës in English may not hapen to mention reading, they were not actually compose'd by writeërs at their desk. The minstrels were too ignorant, and too vulgar, to translate pieceës of several thousand lines ; though such pieceës may have been translateëd or writen for them ; as many a minstrel, no doubt, could sing and play, what he had not the genius to compose, nor even the capacity to write or read.

The " lytell geste of Robyn Hode," could not, it is true, have been compose'd by any *monk*, in his *cel* ; but there can be no reason for supposing it not to have been compose'd by a *priest* in his *closet* : and, in fact, to an authour of that description, this identical legend, or one of the same kind, hath been exprefsly ascribe'd.\*

\* See Bedwells preface to " The tournament of Tottenham." There is another monk or priest, who has writen several metrical romanceës.



*Sir Launfal* is, certainly, a translation, the French original being extant in many librarys. It is not, however, by any means “ the only piece of this sort, in which is inserted the name of the authour.’

There is not, however, one single metrical romance in English known to exist, which appears to have been written by a minstrel. The line adduce’d by bishop Percy, from one in his folio MS.

“ Then is it time for MEE to carpe ;”

by no means proves that the man who sung it had himself compose’d the words : it is sufficient that it had been originally intended to be sung by some minstrel, peradventure by many, or even by the whole body.

Several metrical romanceës, according to bishop Percys account, are extant in his lordships celebrated folio manuscript, many of which are not to be now found in print : amongst these are the following : *Sir Cauline*, *John the reve*, *Guy and Colbronde*, *Libeaux Disconius* (a different copy from the one here printed), *King Arthur and the king of Cornwall*, *Sir Lionel*, *The greene knight*, *The earl of Carlisle*, *Sir Lambwell*, *Merline*, *King Arthurs death*, *The legend of king Arthur*, *The legend of sir Guy*, *Eger and Grime*, and many songs and ballads. “ The MS. [compiled by Thomas Blount, author of *The Law-dictionary*, &c. about the middle of the seventeenth century,]” as we are told by the right reverend prelate, “ is a long narrow volume,

† The “ Advertisment” is sign’d “ Thomas Percy, fellow

containing 191 sonnets, ballads, historical songs, and metrical romances, either in the whole or in part, for many of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect. The first and last leaves," he says, "are wanting; and of 54 pages near the beginning half of every leaf hath been torn away, and several others are injured towards the end; besides that through a great part of the volume the top or bottom line, and sometimes both have been cut off in the binding...The transcripts, moreover, "are sometimes extremely incorrect and faulty, being in such instances probably made from defective copies, or the imperfect recitation of illiterate singers; so that a considerable portion of the song or narrative is sometimes omitted; and miserable trash or nonsense not unfrequently introduced into pieces of considerable merit:" the copyist, it seems, often growing "so weary of his labour as to write on without the least attention to the sense or meaning; so that the word which should form the rhyme is found misplaced in the middle of the line; and we have such blunders as these, *want and will* for *wanton will*; even *pan and wale* for *wan and pale*, &c. &c." Certainly this is a most extraordinary, as well as unfortunate, book, and the labour of the right reverend editour in correcting, refining, improving, completing, and enlarging, the orthography,

of St. John's college, Oxford," his lordship's nephew, whom the late mister Steevens ascribed the present editour to have never seen a word of it.

grammar, text, stile, and supplying the chafms and hiatuses, *valde deflenda!* must have equal'd that of Hercules in cleansing the Augean stable: so that a parcel of old rags and tatters were thus ingeniously and haply converted into an elegant new suit.

The existence and authenticity of this famous MS. in its present mutilate'd and miserable condition is no longer to be deny'd or dispute'd; at the same time, it is a certain and positive fact, that, in the elegant and refine'd work it gave occasion to, there is scarcely one single poem, song or ballad, fairly or honestly printed, either from the above fragment or other alledge'd authorities, from the begining to the end; many pieceës, allso, being inserted, as ancient and authentick, which, there is every reason to believe, never existed before its publication. To correct the obvious errors of an illiterate transcriber, to supply irremediable defects, and to make sense of nonsense, are certainly essential dutys of an editour of ancient poetry; provide'd he act with integrity and publicity; but secretly to suppress the original text, and insert his own fabrications for the sake of providing more refine'd entertainment for readers of taste and genius, is no proof of either judgement, candour, or integrity.

In what manner this ingenious editour conducted himself in this patch'd up publication wil be evident from the following parallel, which may be useful to future manufacturers in this line:

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

*(Reliques, edit. 1795, iii. 350.)*

King Arthur lives in merry Carleile,  
And seemely is to see;  
And there he hath with him queene Genever,  
That bride so bright of blee.

And there he hath with him queene Genever,  
That bride so bright in bower,  
And all his barons about him stoode,  
That were both stiffe and stowre.

The king kept a royall Christmässe  
Of mirth and great honor,

....when . . .

[*About nine stanzas wanting.*]

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE IMPROVEMENT.

(*Reliques*, edit. 1775, iii. 11.)

## PART THE FIRST.

King Arthur lives in merry Carleile  
 And seemely is to fêe;  
 And there ' with him queene Guenever,  
 That bride so bright of blee.

And there ' with him queene Guenever,  
 'That bride so bright in bowre :  
 And all his barons about him stode,  
 'That were both stiffe and stowre.

The king ' a royale Christmasse kept,'  
 ' With' mirth and ' princelye cheare;'  
*To him repaired many a knyghte,*  
*That came both farre and neare.*

*And when they were to dinner sette,*  
*And cups went freely round ;*  
*Before them came a faire damfèlle,*  
*And knelt upon the ground.*

\*.\* The lines or words mark'd with elevated commas are substitutions in the place of the old readings. The whole in *Italicks* is his own.

DISSERTATION ON  
THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.  
THE ORIGINAL.





## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE IMPROVEMENT.

*A boone, a boone, O kinge Arthure,  
 I beg a boone of thee;  
 Avenge me of a carlish knighte,  
 Who hath shent my love and mee.*

*At Tcarne-Wadling his castle stands,  
 Near to that lake so fair,  
 And proudlye rise the battlements,  
 And streamers deck the air.*

*Noe gentle knighte, nor ladye gay,  
 May passe that castle-walle;  
 But from that foule discourteous knighte,  
 Mishappe will them besalle.*

*Hee's twyce the size of common men,  
 Wi' thewes, and finewes stronge,  
 And on his backe he bears a clubbe,  
 That is both thicke and longe.*

*This grimme barðne 'twas our hard happe,  
 But yester morne to see;  
 When to his bowre he bare my love,  
 And sore misused mee.*

*And when I told him, king Arthùre  
 As lyttle shold him spare;  
 Goe tell, sayd hee, that cuckold kinge,  
 To meete mee if he dare.*

DISSERTATION ON  
THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE IMPROVEMENT.

*Upp then flerted king Arthùre,  
And fware by hille and dale,  
He ne'er wolde quitt that grimme barðne,  
Till he had made him quail.*

*Go fetch my sword Excalibar:  
Goe saddle mee my steede;  
Now, by my fayc, that grimme barðne,  
Shall rue this ruthfulle deede.*

*And when he came to Tearne Wadlinge,  
Bene the castle walle:  
“ Come forth; come forth; thou proude barðne,  
Or yielde thyself my thralle.*

*On magicke grounde that castle floode,  
And fenc'd with many a spelle:  
Noe valiant knighte could tread thercon,  
But straite his courage felle.*

*Forth then rush'd that carlish knight,  
King Arthur felte the charme:  
His sturdy sinewes lost their strengthe,  
Downe funke his feeble arme.*

*Nowe yeld thee, yeld thee, king Arthùre,  
Now yeld thee, unto mee:  
Or fighte with mee, or lose thy lande,  
Noe better termes maye bee;*

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

And bring me word what thing it is  
That? a woman most desire.  
This shal be thy ransome Arthur, he fayes,  
For Ile have noe other hier.

King Arthur then held up his hand,  
According thene as was the law,  
He tooke his leave of the baron there,  
And homword can he draw.

And when he came to merry Carlile,  
To his chamber he is gone,  
And ther cam to him his cozen fir Gawaine,  
As he did make his mone.

And there came to him his cozen fir Gawaine,  
That was a curteous knight,  
Why figh you foe fore unckle. Arthur, he said,  
Or who hath done thee unright?

O peace, o peace, thou gentle Gawaine,  
That faire may thee befall;  
For if thou knew my fighting foe deepe,  
Thou wold not mervaille att all.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

*Unlesse thou sweare upon the rood,  
And promise on thy faye,  
Here to returne to Tearne Wadling,  
Upon the new-year's daye;*

And bring me worde what thing it is  
‘ All’ women moſte deſyre;  
This ‘ is’ thy ranſome, Arthur, he ſayes,  
He have noe other hyre.

King Arthur then held up his hande,  
‘ And ſware upon his faye,’  
‘ Then’ tooke his leave of the ‘ grimme barone,’  
And ‘ faſte hee rode awaye.’

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

For when I came to Tearne Wadling,  
A bold barron there I fand,  
With a great club upon his backe,  
Standing stiffe and strong.

And he asked me wether I wold fight,  
Or from him I shold be gone,  
O[r] else I must him a ranfome pay,  
And foe depart him from.

To fight with him I saw noe cause,  
Me thought it was not meet,  
For he was stiffe and strong with all,  
His strokes were nothing sweete.

Therfor this is my ranfome Gawaine,  
I ought to him to pay,  
I must come againe as I am sworne,  
Upon the new yeers day.

And I must bring him word what thing it is  
[*About nine stanzas wanting.*]

Then king Arthur drest him for to ryde,  
In one so rich array,  
Toward the foresaid Tearne Wadling,  
That he might keepe his day.



THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

*And he rode east, and he rode west,  
And did of all inquire,  
What thing it is all women crave,  
And what they most desyre.*

*Some told him riches, pompe, or state;  
Some rayment fine and brighte;  
Some told him mirthe; some flatterye;  
And some a jollye knighte.*

*In letters all king Arthur wrote,  
And scal'd them with his ringe:  
But still his minde was helde in doubte,  
Each tolde a different thinge.*

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

And as he rode over a more,

Hee see a lady where shee fate,

Betwixt an oke and a greene hollen,

She was cladd in red scarlett.

Then there as shold have stood her mouth

Then there was sett her eye;

The other was in her forehead fast,

The way that she might see.

Her nose was crooked and turnd outward,

Her mouth stood foule awry,

A worfe formed lady then shee was,

Never man saw with his eye.

To halch upon him, king Arthur,

The lady was full faine;

But king Arthur had forgott his lesfon,

What he shold say againe.

What knight art thou, the lady sayd,

That wilt not speake to me?

Of me thou nothing [be] dismayd,

Tho I be ugly to see.

For I have halched you curteouslye,

And you will not me againe:

Yett I may happen, fir knight, shee said,

To ease thee of thy paine.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

‘ As ruthfulle’ he rode over a more,  
 He ‘ saw’ a ladye ‘ fette,’  
 ‘ Betweene’ an oke, and a greene ‘ holléye,’  
 ‘ All’ clad in red scarlette.

Her nose was crookt and turnd outwårde,  
 Her ‘ chin’ stoode ‘ all’ awrye ;  
 ‘ And where’ as sholde have ‘ been’ her mouthe,  
 ‘ Lo !’ there was fet her eye.

*Her haïres, like serpents, clung aboute*

*Her checkes of deadlye hewe :*

A worfe-form’d ladye than she was,  
 No man ‘ mote ever viewe.’

To ‘ haile the king in seemelye forte  
 ‘ This’ ladye was fulle faine ;  
 But king Arthùre ‘ al fore amaz’d,’  
 ‘ No aunswere made’ againe.

What ‘ wight’ art thou, the ladye sayd,  
 That wilt not speake to mee ;  
 ‘ Sir, I may chance to ease thy paine,’  
 Though I be ‘ foule’ to see.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

Give thou ease me, lady, he said,  
Or helpe me any thing,  
Thou shalt have gentle Gawaine, my cozen,  
And marry him with a ring.

Why if I helpe thee not, thou noble king Arthur,  
Of thy owne hearts defringe,  
Of gentle Gawaine.....

[*About nine stanzas wanting.*]

And when he came to the Tearne Wadling,  
The baron there cold he frinde [finde],  
With a great weapon on his backe,  
Standing stiffe and stronge.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE IMPROVEMENT.

‘ If’ thou [wilt] ease ‘ my paine,’ he sayd,  
 ‘ And’ helpe me ‘ in my neede ;’  
 ‘ Ask what’ thou wilt, thou grimme ladye,  
*And it shall be thy meede.*

*O sweare mee this upon the roode,  
 And promise on thy faye ;  
 And here the secrette I will telle,  
 That shall thy ransome paye.*

*King Arthur promis’d on his faye,  
 And fware upon the roode ;  
 The secrette then the ladye told,  
 As lightly well shee cou’d.*

*Now this shall be my paye, fir king,  
 And this my guerdon bee,  
 That some yong, fair and courtly knight,  
 Thou bringe to marrye mee.*

*Fast then pricked king Arthùre,  
 Ore hille, and dale, and downe ;  
 And soone he founde the barone’s bowre :  
 And soone the grimme bardune.*

‘ He bare his clubbe’ upon his backe,  
 ‘ He flood bothe’ stiffe and stronge ;  
 ‘ And when he had the letters reade,’  
 Awaye ‘ the lettres slunge.’

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

And then he tooke king Arthurs letters in his hands,  
And away he cold them fling;  
And then he puld out a good browne sword,  
And cryd himself a king.

And he sayd, I have thee and thy land, Arthur,  
To doc as it pleaseth me;  
For this is not thy ransome fure,  
Therefore yeeld thee to me.

And then bespoke him, noble Arthur,  
And bad him hold his hands;  
And give me leave to speake my mind,  
In defence of all my land.

‘He’ said as I came over a more,  
I see a lady where thee fate,  
Betweene an oke and a green hollen,  
Shee was clad in red scarlette.

And she says a woman will have her will,  
And this is all her cheef desire,  
Doe me right as thou art a baron of skill,  
This is thy ransome and all thy hyer.

He sayes, an early vengeance light on her,  
She walkes on yonder more,  
It was my fister that told thee this,  
She is a mishappen hore.



THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

‘ Nowe yielde’ thee, Arthur, and thy ‘ lands,’  
 ‘ All forfeit unto’ mee ;”

For this is not thy ‘ paye, fir king,  
 ‘ Nor may thy ranfome bee.’

‘ Yet hold thy hand, thou proude barðne,’  
 ‘ I pray thee’ hold ‘ thy’ hand ;  
 And give mee leave to speake ‘ once moe,’  
 In ‘ reskewe’ of my land.

‘ This morne,’ as I came over a more,  
 I ‘ saw’ a ladye ‘ sette,’  
 Betweene an oke; and a greene hollèye,  
 ‘ All’ clad in red scarlèt.

Shee fayer, ‘ all women’ will have ‘ their’ wille,  
 This is ‘ their’ chief defyre ;  
 ‘ Now yield,’ as thou art a barone ‘ true,’  
 ‘ That I have payd mine hyre.’

An earlye vengeaunce light on her !  
 ‘ The carlish baron swore :  
 ‘ Shee’ was my sifter tolde thee this,  
 ‘ And shee’s’ a mishapen whore.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

But heer Ile make mine avow to god,

To do her an evill turne ;

For an ever I may thate fowle theefe ge[t]

In a fyer I will her burne.

*[About nine stanzas wanting.]*

## THE SECOND PART.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE IMPROVEMENT.

But here I will make mine avowe,  
 To do her 'as ill a' turne:  
 For an ever I may that foule theefe gette,  
 In a fyre I will her burne.

## PART THE SECOND.

*Homewarde pricked king Arthùre,  
 And a wearye man was hee;  
 And soone he mette queene Guenever,  
 That bride so bright of blee.*

*What newes! what newes! thou noble king,  
 Howe, Arthur, hast thou sped?  
 Where hast thou hung the carlish knight?  
 And where bestow'd his head?*

*The carlish knight is safe for mee,  
 And free fro mortal harme:  
 On magicke grounde his castle stands,  
 And fenc'd with many a charme.*

*To bowe to him I was fulle faine,  
 And yelde mee to his hand;  
 And but for a lothly ladye, there  
 I sholde have lost my land.*

*And nowe this fills my hearte with woe,  
 And sorrowe of my life;  
 I swore a yonge and courtlye knight,  
 Sholde marry her to his wife.*

cxxviii

DISSERTATION ON

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

*Then bespake him sir Gawàine,  
That was eter a gentle knighte:  
That lothly ladye I will wed;  
Therefore be merrye and lighte.*

*Nowe naye, nowe naye, good sir Gawàine;  
My sister's sonne yee bee;  
This lothlye ladye's all too grimme,  
And all too foule for yee.*

*Her nose is crookt and turn'd outwàrde;  
Her chin stands all awrye;  
A worse form'd ladye than shee is,  
Was never seen with eye.*

*What though her chin stand all awrye,  
And shee be foule to see:  
I'll marry her, unkle, for thy sake,  
And I'll thy ransome bee.*

*Nowe thanks, nowe thanks, good sir Gawàine,  
And a blessing thee betyde!  
To-morrow wee'll have knights and squires,  
And wee'll goe fetch thy bride.*

*And wee'll have hawkes and wee'll have houndes,  
To cover our intent;  
And wee'll away to the greene forèst,  
As wee a hunting went.*

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

Sir Lancelot and fir Steven bold,  
They rode with them that day,  
And the formost of the company  
There rode the steward Kay.

Soe did fir Banier and fir Bore,  
Sir Garrett with them soe gay,  
Soe did fir Tristeram that gentle knight,  
To the forrest fresh and gay.

And when he came to the greene forrest,  
Underneath a greene holly tree,  
There fate that lady in red scarlet,  
That unseemly was to see.

Sir Kay beheld this ladyes face,  
And looked uppon her fuire;  
Whosoever kisses this lady, he sayes,  
Of his kisse he stands in feare.

Sir Kay beheld the lady againe,  
And looked upon her snout,  
Whosoever kisses this lady, he saies,  
Of his kisse he stands in doubt.

Peace, cozen Kay, then said fir Gawaine,  
Amend thee of thy life;  
For there is a knight amongst us all  
That must marry her to his wife.



THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

Sir Lancelot, fir Stephen bolde,  
 They rode with them that daye;  
 And foremost of the companye,  
 There rode the stewarde Kaye:

Soe did fir Banier and fir Bore,  
 ‘ And eke fir Garratte keene;’  
 Sir Tristram ‘ too,’ that gentle knight,  
 ‘ To the forest freshe and ‘ greene.’

And when ‘ they’ came to the greene forrèst,  
 Beneathe a ‘ faire’ holley tree,  
 There fate that ladye in red scarlèt,  
 ‘ That unseemelye was to see.

Sir Kay beheld ‘ that’ lady’s face,  
 And looked upon her sweere;  
 Whoever kises ‘ that’ ladye, he sayes,  
 Of his kisse he stands in feere.

Sir Kay beheld ‘ that’ ladye againe,  
 And looked upon her snout;  
 Whoever kises ‘ that’ ladye, he sayes,  
 Of his kisse he stands in doubt.

Peace, ‘ brother’ Kay, sayde fir Gawàine,  
 And amend thee of thy life:  
 For there is a knight amongst us all,  
 Must marry her to his wife.

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

What wedd her to wiffe ! then said sir Kay,

In the divells name anon ;

Gett me a wiffe where-ere I may,

For I had rather be flaine.

Then foome tooke up their hawkes in haft,

And some tooke up their hounds,

And some fware they wold not marry her

For citty nor for towne.

And then bespake him noble king Arthur,

And fware there by this day,

For a litle foule fight and misliking,

[*About nine stanzas wanting.*]

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

What 'marry this foule queene, quoth' Kay,  
 I' the devil's name anone;  
 Gett mee a wife wherever I maye,  
 'In sooth shee shall be none.'

Then some tooke up their hawkes in haste,  
 And some took up their houndes;  
 And 'sayd' they wolde not marry her,  
 For 'cities,' nor for 'townes.'

'Then bespake him king Arthùre,  
 And fware there by this daye;  
 For a little foule fight and mislikinge,  
*Yee shall not say her naye.*

*Peace, lordings, peace; sir Gawaine sayd;  
 Nor make debate and strife;  
 This lothlye ladye I will take,  
 And marry her to my wife.*

*Nowe thanks, nowe thanks, good sir Gawaine,  
 And a blefsinge be thy meede!  
 For as I am thine owne ladye,  
 Thou never shalt rue this deede.*

*Then up they took that lothly dame,  
 And home anone they bringe:  
 And there sir Gawaine he her wed,  
 And married her with a ringe.*

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

*And when they were in wed-bed laid,  
And all were done awaye ;  
“ Come turne to mee, mine owne wed-lord.  
Come turne to mee I praye.”*

*Sir Gawaine scant could lift his head,  
For sorrowe and for care ;  
When, lo ! inlead of that lothelye dame,  
Hee sawe a young ladye faire.*

*Sweet blushes stayn'd her rud-red cheekes,  
Her eyen were blacke as sloe :  
The ripening cherryc swellde her lippe,  
And all her necke was snowe.*

*Sir Gawaine kifs'd that lady faire,  
Lying upon the sheete :  
And swore, as he was a true knighte ;  
The spice was never soe sweete.*

*Sir Gawaine kifs'd that lady brighte,  
Lying there by his side ;  
“ The fairest flower is not soe faire :  
Thou never can'st bee my bride.”*

*I am thy bride, mine owne deare lorde,  
The same whiche thou didst knowe,  
That was soe lothlye, and was wont  
Upon the wild more to goe.*

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

Then shee said, choose thee, gentle Gawaine;

Truth as I doe say,

Whether thou wilt have [me] in this liknesse,

In the night or else in the day.

And then bespake him gentle Gawaine,

With one foe mild of moode,

Sayes, well I know what I wold say,

God grant it may be good.

To have thee fowle in the night,

When I with thee shold play,

Yet I had rather, if I might,

Have thee fowle in the day.

What when lords goe with ther 'feires,' shee said,

Both to the ale and wine,

Alas! then I must hyde my selfe,

I must not goe withinne.

And then bespake him gentle Gawaine,

Said, Lady thats but a skill,

And because thou art my owne lady,

Thou shalt have all thy will.

Then she said, blessed be thou, gentle Gawaine,

This day that I thee see,

For as thou see me att this time,

From henceforth I wil be.



THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

‘ Nowe, gentle Gawaine, chuse, quoth shee,’  
‘ And make thy choice with care ;’  
Whether ‘ by night, or else by daye,’  
‘ Shall I be foule or faire ?’

“ To have thee foule [still] in the night,  
When I with thee should playe !  
‘ I had rather-farre, my lady deare,’  
[To] have thee foule ‘ by’ daye.”

What when ‘ gaye ladyes’ goe with their ‘ lordes,’  
To [drinke] the ale and wine ;  
Alas ! then I must hide myself,  
I must not goe with ‘ mine ?’

“ ‘ My fair ladyè, sir Gawaine sayd,’  
‘ I yield me to thy’ skille ;  
Because thou art mine owne ladyè  
Thou shalt have all thy wille.”

‘ Now’ blest be thou, ‘ sweete’ Gawàine,  
[And] ‘ the’ day that I thee see ;  
For as thou seest mee at this time,  
‘ Soe shall I ever bee.’

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

## THE ORIGINAL.

My father was an old knight,  
And yett it chanced foe,  
That he marryed a younge lady,  
That brought me to this woe.

Shee witched me, being a faire young lady,  
To the greene forrest to dwell,  
And there I must walke in womans liknesse,  
Most like a feeind of hell.

She witched my brother to a carlist b....

[*About nine stanzas wanting.*]

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

My father was an 'aged' knighte,  
 And yet it chanced foe,  
 He 'tooke to wife' a 'falsè' ladyè,  
 'Whiche' broughte me to this woe.

Shee witch'd me, being a faire yonge 'maide,'  
 'In' the greene forèst, to dwelle;  
 And there 'to abide' in 'lothlye shape'  
 Most like a fiend of helle.

*Midst mores and mosses; woods and wilds;  
 To lead a longsome life:  
 Till some yong faire and courtlye knighte  
 Wolde marrye me to his wife:*

*Nor fully to gaine mine owne trewe shape,  
 Such was her devilish skille;  
 Until he wolde yielde to be rul'd by mee,  
 And let mee have all my wille.*

She witchd my brother to a 'carlish' boore,  
 And made him stiffc and stronge;  
 And built him a bowre on magicke groundè,  
 To live by rapine and wronge.

*But now the spelle is broken throughe,  
 And wronge is turnde to righte;  
 Henceforth I shall bee a faire ladyè,  
 And hee be a gentlc knighte.*

## THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

That looked foe foule and that was wont  
On the wild more to goe.

Come kisse her, brother Kay, then said fir Gawain,  
And amend the of thy life,  
I fware this is the fame lady  
That I marryed to my wiffe.

Sir Kay kised that lady bright,  
Standing upon his feete ;  
He swore, as he was trew knight,  
The spice was never foe sweete.

Well, cozen Gawaine, saies fir Kay,  
Thy chance is fallen arright,  
For thou hast gotten one of the fairest maids,  
I ever saw with my sight.

It is my fortune, said fir Gawaine,  
For my unckle Arthurs sake :  
I am as glad as graffe wold be of raine,  
Great joy that I may take.

Sir Gawaine tooke the lady by the one arme,  
Sir Kay tooke her by the tother ;  
They led her straight to king Arthur,  
As they were brother and brother.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAINE.

THE ORIGINAL.

King Arthur welcomed them there all,  
And soe did lady Genever his queene,  
With all the knights of the rounde table,  
Most seemly to be seene.

King Arthur beheld that lady faire,  
That was soe faire and bright ;  
He thanked Christ in trinity,  
For sir Gawaine that gentle knight.

Soe did the knights, both more and lesse,  
Rejoyced all that day,  
For the good chance that hapened was  
To sir Gawaine and his lady gay.

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This mode of publishing ancient poetry displays, it must be confess'd, considerable talent and genius, but favours strongly, at the same time, of unfairness and dishonesty. Here are numerous stanzas inserted which are not in the original, and others omitted which are there. The purchasers and perusers of such a collection are deceive'd and impose'd upon; the pleasure they receive is derive'd from the idea of antiquity, which, in fact, is perfect illusion. If the ingenious editour had publish'd all his imperfect poems by correcting the blunders of puerility or inattention, and supplying the defects

of barbarian ignorance, with proper distinction of type (as, in one instance, he actually has done), it would not onely have gratify'd the austereëst antiquary, but allso provideëd refine'd entertainment "for every reader of taste and genius." He would have acted fairly and honorably, and giveën every sort of reader complete satisfaction. Authenticity would have been uniteëd with improvement, and all would have gone wel; whereas, in the present editions, it is firmly believe'd, not one article has been ingenuously or faithfully printed from the begining to the end: nor did the late eminent 'Thomas Tyrwhitt, so ardent a researcher into ancient poetry, and an intimate friend of the possesfour, ever see this curious, though tatter'd, fragment; nor would the late excellent George Steevens, on the bishops personal application, consent to sanction the authenticity of the printed copy with his signature.\*

\* The bishop of Dromore (as he now is), on a former occasion, haveing himself, as he wel knows, already falsify'd and corrupted a modern Scottish song, "This line," he says, "being quoted from memory, and given as old Scottish poetry is [by no one, in such a case, except himself] now usually printed (*Reliques*, 1775, I, xxxviii,) † ("COME ZE FRAE THE BORDER?") to give it a certain appearance of rust and antiquity. This identical song, being, afterward, faithfully and correctly printed in a certain *Collection* of such things, from the earlyest copy known, which, like all the rest, was accurately refer'd to,

"LIVE YOU upo' the border?"

(*Scottish songs*, printed for J. Johnson, 1794, I, 266) the worthy

† Scottish poetry, of the 15th or 16th century, has been so printed, but not that of the 18th, unless by impostours. \*

## ROMANCE AND MINSTRELSY. cxliii

A change similar to that which is before represented to have taken place in France, took place in Engleland at a somewhat later period. Caxton, our first printer, had so little taste for poetry, that he never printed one single metrical romance, nor, in fact, any poetical composition whatever, beside Gowers *Confessio amantis*, The Canterbury tales, and a few other pieces of Chaucer, Lydgate, &c. He translated, indeed, Virgil and Ovid, out of

prelate thought proper, in the last edition of his already recited compilation, to assert that his own corruption "would have been readily corrected by that copy," had not all confidence been destroyed by its being altered in the "Historical essay" prefixed to that publication to

"YE LIVE upo' the border;"

the better," he adds, with his usual candour, "to favour a position, that many of the pipers might live upon the borders, for the convenience of attending fairs, &c. in both kingdoms." This, however, is an INFAMOUS LYE; it being much more likely that he himself, who has practised every kind of forgery and imposture, had some such end to alter this identical line, with much more violence, and, as he owns himself, actual "CORRUPTION," to give the quotation an air of antiquity, which it was not entitled to. The present editor's text is perfectly accurate, to a single comma, but "this line," as he pretends to apologise for his own, "being quoted [in the *Essay*] from memory," having frequently heard it so sung, in his younger days, by a north-country blacksmith, without thinking it necessary, at the moment, to turn to the genuine text, which lay at his elbow, and which his lordship DARE NOT IMPEACH. "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see [more] clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye." (*Gospel according to S. Matthew*, Chap. VII, Verse 5.)



French, into Engleish, prose; and we are indebted to him, by the like mean, for several venerable black-letter romanceës in folio, or quarto, such as *Mort Darthur*, compile'd, it seems, by sir Thomas Malory; *Charlemagne*, *Reynard the fox*, and others; the first of which, though most abominably mangle'd, became exceedingly popular, and was frequently reprinted; although no copy of the original edition is now known to exist. Several of the old Engleish metrical romanceës were, afterward, printed by Wynken de Worde, Pinson, Copland, and others, chiefly in the earlyer part of the sixteenth century; many of which are stil preserve'd in publick librarys, and a few private collections.

When we consider, says mister Warton, the feudal manners, and the magnificence of our Norman ancestors, their love of military glory, the enthusiasm with which they engaged in the crusades, and the wonders to which they must have been familiarise'd from these eastern enterpriseës, we naturally suppose, that their retinue abounded with minstrels and harpers, and that their chief entertainment was to listen to the recital of romantick and martial adventures. But i have been much disappointed in my searches after the metrical tales which must have prevail'd in their times. Most of those old heroick songs are perish'd with the stately castles in whose halls they were sung. Yet they are not so totally lost as we may be apt to imagine. Many of them stil partly exist in the old Engleish metrical

romances,\* yet divested of their original form, polish'd in their stile, adorn'd with new incidents, successively modernise'd by repeated transcription and recitation, and retaining little more than the outlines of the original." This, it must be confess'd, is not only a just and accurate, but also a beautiful and interesting, description of the old English romanceës. Many, however, in the French language, still remain, correct and perfect as they came from the hands of the poet or minstrel, and preserve'd in contemporary manuscripts, more or less, in most of the publick libraris in Europe, being, likewise, infinitely superior, in point of stile and expression, to their translations into English, of the comparative merit whereof it is highly probable our learned historian had a very imperfect idea.

It is no slight honour to ancient romance that, so late as the seventeenth century, when it was become superannuated and obsolete, that the expansive and enlighten'd mind of our British Homer was enrapture'd with the study, as is manifested, by frequent and happy allusions, in his two principal poems :

“ ———and what resounds  
In fable or romance of Uthers son,  
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;  
And all who since, baptiz'd or infidel,  
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,

\* But many, more in the French, some of which were actually written in Engleland.

Damasco, or Maroccó, or Trebifond ;  
 Or whom Biferta sent from Afric shore,  
 When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
 By Fontarabbia.\*

(" Though like a cover'd field, where champions  
bold

Wont ride in arm'd; and at the foldans chair  
 Defi'd the best of Panim chivalry  
 To mortal combat or career with lance.")†

" Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,  
 When Agrican, with all his northern powers,  
 Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,  
 The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win  
 The fairest of her sex Angelica,  
 His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,  
 Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemane:  
 Such and so numerous was thir chivalrie."‡

He had even meditateëd a metrical romance, or  
 epick poem, upon the story of Arthur, which would,  
 doubtless, have excel'd in sublimity and interest  
 every thing he has left us, had not his increasëing  
 attachment to the puritanical superstition of the  
 times perverted his intention :

\* *P. L. B.* 1, V. 579. " Next," he says, " i betook me among  
 those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn can-  
 tos the deeds of knighthood...So that even those books...prov'd  
 to me so many inticements to the love and stedfast observatïon  
 of...virtue..." See Tolands *Life*, P. 35.

† *Il. i.* V. 762.

‡ *Paradise regain'd*, B. 3, V. 336. See the *Orlando innamorato*  
 of Boiardo.

“ Since first this subject for heroic song  
Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late  
Not sedulous by nature to indite  
Warrs, hitherto the onely argument  
Heroic deem'd chief maistrice to disfect,  
With long and tedious havoc, fabl'd knights  
In battels feign'd;—

Or tilting furniture, emblazon'd shields,  
Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds;  
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights  
At joust and torneament; then marshal'd feast,  
Serv'd up in hall with sewers, and seneshals.”\*

Notwithstanding his religious enthusiasm, he still appears to regard the favourite pursuits of his earlier days with a kind of melancholy sensation:

And casts a long and lingering look behind.

To the above design he himself alludes in his *Epitaphium Damonis*, V. 161, &c.

“ *Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes  
Dicam, et Pundrasidos regnum rectus Inogeniæ,  
Brennumque Artiragumque duces, priscumque Be-  
linum,  
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;  
Tum gravidam Arturo, fatali fraude, Iögernem,  
Menduces cultus, asumptaque Gorlois arma,  
Merlini dolus.*”—

So that, it seems, the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth was to have been the platform of his

\* P. L. B. 8. (edition 1667.) See Tolands *Life*, 16, 17.

sublime poetical structure; but this project, whether wisely or not, he abandon'd. Pope, likewise, had an intention of writeing a poem on the subject of *Brutus*.\*

#### § 4. MINSTRELS AND MINSTRELSY.

Homer, who, as it hath been already observe'd, compos'd romanceës in Greek verse, was a rhapsodist, bard, or minstrel, who resorted to feasts, at which he sung his compositions to the lyre. He says of himself, in one of his hymns: "Hail, heavenly powers, whose praiseës i sing; let me, allso, hope to be remember'd in the ageës to come, and, when any one, born of the tribes of men, comes hither, a weary traveler, and enquires, Who is the sweetest of singing men that resort to your feasts, and whom you most delight to hear? Then do you make answer for me: It is the blind man that dwels in Chios; his songs excel all that can ever be sung."†

\* See his Life, by Ruffhead.

† Blackwells *Enquiry into the life of Homer*, P. 110. Huet, to the same purpose, observes, "It is necessary to remark, for the honour of the troubadours, that Homer has been one before them, and that he went about reciteing his verseës from town to town." (*De l'origine des romans*, Paris, 1678, P. 128.) Doctor Bentley says, "He wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies, to be sung by himself, for small earnings and good cheer, at festivals and other days of merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the men, and the *Odysseïs* for the other sex. These

## ROMANCE AND MINSTRELSY. cxlix

An anecdote, communicateed to Herodotus by the Lesbians, favours, likewise, very strongly of the minstrel character. Arion of Methymna [near three hundred years after 'Homer], who was second to none of the harpers of his age, and made, and name'd, and taught, the dithyrambick, at Corinth, haveing desire'd to sail into Italy and Sicily; and wishing, much money being acquire'd, to return back to Corinth; and whereas he was about to go to Tarentum, because he trusted none more than the Corinthians, hire'd a ship of some of those men. When, therefor, they were out at sea, these conspire'd against Arion, that, he being got rid of, they might enjoy his money. He, understanding this, pray'd, the money being offer'd to them, that his life might be spare'd. Not prevailing upon the mariners, they order'd, that he should either lay violent hands upon himself, that so he might obtain sepulture upon the shore, or, immediately, leap into the sea. Arion, at this difficulty, besought, that, forasmuch as such was their pleasure, they would suffer him to sing, standing upon the deck: and, when he should have sung, he promise'd that he would lay violent hands upon himself. These, therefor, (for the desire of hearing the most excellent songs were not collected together in the form of an epic poem, till Pisistratus's time, about 500 years after." (*Remarks upon a late Discourse of free-thinking*, P. 18.) This ancient bard, as it is suppose'd by some learned men, could neither write nor read.



lent performer had feize'd them,) retire'd from the poop to the midst of the ship. He, being dress'd with every ornament, and, the harp takeën up, standing upon the deck, awake'd the song which is call'd orthian: and that being sung, he cast himself, as he was, with all his finery, into the sea: and these, truely, held their course for Corinth: but he, receive'd, they say, by a dolphin, was carry'd to Tænarus: and, when he had descended from the dolphin, he went, in that same habit, to Corinth: and, when he arrive'd there, he relateëd every thing that had hapen'd. These things the Corinthians and Lesbians wont to say: and there was extant at Tænarus the moderate gift of Arion, in brass, a man above, carry'd by a dolphin.\*

It is highly probable, as Huet has remark'd, that other illustrious poets of Greece imitateëd Homer: he particularly mentions Simonides, who, he expressly says, exercise'd the profession of a *trouqueur* and *chanteur*.†

The *histriones* of the Romans were theatrical performers, who deliver'd the oral parts; the *mimi* dumb actors, who express'd every thing by dancing and gestures: neither of these, of course, bore the least resemblance to a minstrel; except that it has been suggested by mister Ledwich to doctor Percy upon a reference of Salmasius (Notes to *Historiæ augustæ scriptores*, Paris, 1620, fo. P. 385);

\* *Clio*, § 24.

† *De l'origine*, &c. as before.



whence the latter infers that the imitative minstrel of Geoffrey of Monmouth shave'd himself by classical authority.\*

Both names, however, seem, after the decline of the empire, to have been, erroneously, confer'd upon the minstrels, or musical performers of those times. Since, at least the *mimes*, or jugglers, are allow'd, by the laws of James the second, king of Majorca, to be lawfully admisible in courts, as their office affords pleasure: wherefor that prince ordains, that in his palace the number of *mimes* should be *five*, of whom two were to be *trumpeters*, and the third, a *tabourer*: so that the minstrel who made use of the phrase "*Mimia et cantu victum acquiro*," must, necessarily, have intended two distinct functions.†

Whether the Lombards brought the minstrel arts into Italy, or acquire'd them from the old inhabitants, is a question of difficult solution: but, in the year 774, it hapen'd that a *joculator*, or juggler, came to Charles the emperour, usually call'd

\* Dio, indeed, in the time of Nero, says, that "It was most filthy and grievous to see, that men and women, not onely of the equestrian, but, even, of the senatorial order, enter'd into the orchestra, and circus, and amphitheatre, like the vilest men: and some of them sung to pipes, dance'd, acted tragedys and comedys, sung to the harp, &c. Even Nero himself, frequently, at the voice of the common cryer, in the habit of a harper, sung to the harp. (Refer to the article *Citharædos* in the index to Reimars edition.)

† *Reliques*, &c. I, lxxiv.

Charlemagne, and, turning round in the sight of his followers, sung a song compose'd by himself.\*

Philip Mouskes, in the time of Philip the august, feigns this emperor to have formerly giveën, to his parasites and mimes or mimicks (*scurris et mimis suis*), the county of Provence; whence, afterward, so great a number of poets grew up in this country:

“*Quar quant li buen rois Karlemaigne,  
Ot toute mise à son demaine,  
Provence, qui mult iert plentive,  
De vins, de bois, d'aigue, de rive,  
As leceours, as menestreus,  
Qui sont au ques luxurieux  
Le donna toute & departa.*” †

The anecdote, at the same time, seems to require more ancient testimony than that of Philip Mouskes.

Sainte-Palaye is of opinion that chivalry, consider'd merely as a ceremony by which young persons, destin'd to the military profession, receive'd the first arms they were to carry, was known from the time of Charlemagne: but that, regarded as a dignity which gave the first rank in the military order, and which was confer'd by a species of investiture, accompany'd by certain ceremonys, and a solemn oath, it would be difficult to carry it higher than the eleventh century. † Henry the first, however, emperor of Germany, surname'd *The*

\* Muratori, *Antiquitates Italiae*, II, 2.

† Du Cange *MINISTRELLUS et LECATOR*.

‡ *Memoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie*, I, 65.

*fowler*, appears to have establish'd tournaments in 930.\* There is, likewise, an instance of a just, or single combat, on horseback, at Paris, in 978, between Grey-coat, earl of Anjou, and Bertold, brother to the duke of Saxony.†

Chivalry and minstrelsy, it is generally thought, had some sort of connection, and, possibly, a co-ëtaneous origin; but little or nothing is known for a certainty respecting the latter, til about a century after the establishment of the former. According to a contemporary historian, Henry the third, surname'd *The Black*, or *Blackbeard*, emperor of Germany, celebrateing his nuptials with Agnes, daughter of William earl of Poictou, at the town of Ingelenheim, in 1043, permitted an infinite multitude of minstrels and juglers, to the accumulation of his praise, empty and hungry, without food and rewards, to depart forrowing.‡

“The minstrels,” as define'd by the ingenious and respectable authour of an essay on the ancient English ones prefix'd to “*Reliques of ancient English poetry*,” were an order of men in the middle ages, who united the arts of poetry and music, and

\* See his *Leges Hasti ludiales, five de torneamentis in Goldasti Imperatorum recesus*, Hanovix, 1609, fo. II, 41.

† *R. de Diceto* 459.

‡ *Hermanni Contracti chronicon*, Basileæ, 1529, fo. 218, b. John Bromton, abbot of Jervaux, says, that the money which he had been before accusom'd to give to the minstrels, he distributēd to the poor: but this was robing Peter to pay Paul.

ſung verſes to the harp of their own compoſing. They alſo appear to have accompanied their ſongs,” he ſays, “ with mimicry and action; and to have practiſed ſuch various means of diverting as were much admired in thoſe rude times, and ſupplied the want of more refined entertainments.” Thus ſtood the paſſage in the firſt, ſecond, and third editions: but the learned authour not having brought any proof that theſe characters compoſe’d their own ſongs, and ſtil leſs that the fingers themſelves uſe’d “ mimicry and action;” it appears, in the laſt edition, thus alter’d: “ who ſubſiſted by the arts of poetry and muſic, and ſang to the harp verſes compoſed by themſelves or others.” But that thoſe minſtrels, who ſung to the harp, “ accompanied their ſongs with mimicry and action,” ſtil appears to ſtand in need of authority.

*Maistre* Wace, in his account of the coronation feaſt of king Arthur, is careful to enumerate the various orders of minſtrelſy, which he ſuppoſeës to have been preſent on that occaſion:

“ *Mult oſt à la cort* juleors,

*Chanteors, et rumenteors.*

*Mult poiſſez oir* chançons,

*Rotuenges et voialx* ſons,

*Vileors; lais, et notez,*

*Laiz de vieles, lais de rotez,*

*Laiz de harpez, laiz de fietalx,*

*Lires, tempes, et chalemealx,*

*Symphoniez, pſalterions,*

Monacors, *des cymbes*, chorons.  
*Assez i ot tregetours,*  
*Joieresles, et joieors,*  
*Li uns disoent contes et fables, &c.”\**

The manners of a company of minstrels are thus describe'd in an old *fabliau*, probably of the thirteenth century :

“ *Li quens manda les menestrels ;*  
*Et si a fet crier entre els,*  
*Qui la meillor truffe sauroit*  
*Dire, ne faire, qu'il auroit*  
*Sa robe d'escarlate nuove.*  
*L'uns menestrels à l'autre reuve*  
*Fere son mestier tel qu'il sot,*  
*Li uns fet l'yvre, l'autre sot ;*  
*Li uns chante, li autre note ;*  
*Et li autres dit la riote ;*  
*Et li autres la jenglerie ;*  
*Cil qui sevent de ‘jouglerie’*  
*Vielent par devant le conte ;*  
*Aucuns ja qui fabliaus conte*  
*Il i ot dit mainte risee, &c.”†*

\* ..Many juglers had they at the court, *singers*, and *rimers* ; Many songs might you hear, *Rote-songs* (see *Fabliaux ou contes*, B, 323), and *vocal songs* ; *Fiddlers*, *lays*, and *notes* ; *Lays* for *fiddles*, *lays* for *rotes* ; *Lays* for harps, *lays* for *sytoles* ; *Lyres*, and *corn-pipes* ; *Symphonys*, *psalterys* ; *Monochords*, *cymbals*, *rhoirs*. Enow there were of *tregetours* ; female and male performers (*joueurs*, F.) ; Some say'd *tales* and *fables*, &c.

† *Fabliau & contes*, II, 161. “ The count commanded the minstrels, And so he has cause'd to be cry'd among them,

In another extract from a romance, written in 1230, we are told that

*“ Quand les tables ostées furent  
Cil juggleurs in pies esturent  
S'ont vielles, et harpes prisées,  
Chansons, sons, vers, et reprises,  
Et gestes chanté nos ont.”\**

The minstrels, certainly, were not always an order of men “ who united the arts of poetry and music, and sung verses to the harp of their own composing,” as the worthy divine who formerly made that assertion has been compelled to acknowledge. At the nuptials of Robert, brother to St. Lewis, in 1237, “ Those who are call'd minstrels,” according to Alberic, “ in this spectacle of vanity did many things there; as he who on a horse rode upon a rope in the air; and as those who rode two oxen clad in scarlet, blowing their horns at the several messes which were serve'd up to the king at table.”\*

That he who could say or do the best gibe should have his new scarlet robe. Some of the minstrels pray'd another, To do his business such as he knew, Some sung, others note'd; And others had recourse to scolding, And others to raillery; Those who knew jugglery, Fiddle'd before the count; Some there were told *fabliaus*, There was say'd many a laughable thing.

\* When the tables were taken away, The jugglers stood up on their feet, So have they taken violins and harps, And we had songs, tunes, verses, and reprises, And gestures sung.

† “ *Illi qui dicuntur ministrelli [l. minstrelli] in spectaculo vanitates multa ibi fecerunt, sicut ille qui in equo super cordam*



In the ancient *Roman de Berthe au grand pied*, written by king Adenés, a wel-known poet so call'd, in the thirteenth century, it is relateëd, that dureing the grand feast giveën by Pepin on his marriage, there was executeëd a magnificent concert, compose'd by three minstrels, of whom one play'd upon the *vielle* (or fiddle), another upon the *harp*, and the third upon the *lute*.†

It is certain that many persons in France bore the title of "*Roy de ministraux*," instanceës whereof are giveën by Du Cange: but, in Engleland, though Anstis has mention'd several *minstrels* who are distinguish'd by the title of *king*, (as *Rex Robertus ministrallus*, &c. in the time of king Edward I.) none of them is exprefsly call'd *rex ministrallorum*, or *king of the minstrels*, (except John Caumz, king of Richard the seconds, in 1387); neither does his *Rex juglatorum* belong to this country. Adenés, a celebrateëd poet, who live'd in the 13th century, says of himself, in one of his romances:

" *Ce livre de Cleomades*  
*Rimé je le roy Adenez,*  
*Menestre au bon duc Henry:*"

meaning, it seems, Henry duke of Brabant, who dye'd in 1247. He, elsewhere, calls himself *Roy*

*in aere equitaret, & sicut illi qui duos boves de scarlate vestitos equitabant cornitantes ad singula fercula quæ apponebantur regi in mensa.*" Chro. P. 362; *Memoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie*, I, 243. I

† *Bib. des romans*, Avril, 1777, P. 147.



*Adenés*, and is so call'd by others: but stil the reason is unknown.

Pasquier is quite at a loss to account for the word *king* as apply'd to a *minstrel*; remarking only that the word *jouingleur* [*jouglerie*] had, by suc-  
cession of time, turn'd into *flight-of-hand*. "We have seen," he says, "in our youth the *jouingleurs* meet at a certain day, every year, in the town of Chauny in Picardy, to shew their profesion before the people, who could do best; and this," ads he, "that i here say of them is not to depreciate these ancient *rimeërs*, but to shew that there is nothing so beauteous which is not annihilateëd with time:"\* where, by the way, he seems, by the expresion "*anciens rimeurs*," to allude rather to what they had formerly been, than to what they were in his own time, when, as he has allready told us, they were sunk into mere *juglers*.

That the different profesors of minstrelsy were, in ancient times, distinguish'd by names appropriateëd to their respective pursuits, cannot reasonably be disputeëd, though it may be difficult to prove. The *trouveur*, *trouverre*, or *rymour*, was he who compose'd *romans*, *contes*, *fabliaux*, *chansons*, and *lais*; and those who confine'd themselves to the composition of *contes* and *fabliaux*, obtain'd the appellation of *conteurs*, *conteours*, or *fabliers*. The *menetrier*, *menestrel*, or *minstrel*, was he who

\* *Recherches*, &c. Paris, 1633, fo. P. 611.

accompany'd his song by a musical instrument, both the words and the melody being occasionally furnish'd by himself, and occasionally by others.\* The *jogelour*, *jogleor*, † *jugleor*, *jogelere*, or *jugler*,

\* Le Grand distinguishes the *menestrier* who play'd and sung from the *menestrel* who was the chief or head of the troop; but without being able to adduce any authority for proving such a distinction.

† Not *jongleur*, as the ignorant or inattentive French printers of the 15th century, who could not, it is probable, read the manuscripts, and mistook the *u* for an *n*, there being, in fact, little or no distinction between them, uniformly orthographise'd it: and as every French authour, historian, commentator, etymologist, glosarist, or dictionary-makeer, with the whole herd of copyists and printers, from that time to the present, have constantly writen, printed, etymologise'd, and explain'd it. In every manuscript, however, French or Norman, of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, or, at least, wherever the *u* occurs, and can be distinguish'd from an *n*, it is uniformly writen *jogleour*, or *jogleor* (*Roman de Troye*, Harley MS. 4492), but generally without a *u*, *joglere* (*Roman de Fitz-Guarine*, in the kings MS. 12 C XII), and frequently without an *o*, as *jugleour* (Harley MS. 2253), *jugelere* (*Le Brut*, passim). Many hundred of such instances could have been easily aded, but the scrupulous reader had better consult the originals. The same propriety was observe'd in Engleland, where the corrupt orthography, *jongler*, has never been made use of, either in manuscript or print, til within these few years, and, probably, for the first time, in the *Reliques of ancient English poetry*. Thus, in Davies *Lyf of Alyfander*:

“ The minstrelles synge, the *jogelours* carpe:”

Again, in Robert Mannyns translation from Peter of Brilington:

“ *Jogelours* were there inouh.”

But though he names both, he does not give them several

amused the spectators with slight of hand tricks, cups and balls, &c.

Again, in *The freres tale*, V. 7049:

“ A lousy *jogelour* can deceiven thee.”

This appears clear from the conduct of John de Raumpayne, who, when he sets out to deceive Moris of Whittington, takes with him a male, which contains his juglerys, and out of which, most likely, he had already so blacken'd, inflatēd, and deform'd his visage, that his most intimate acquaintance did not know him. The *chanteour*, or *chanterre*, was one who sang; the *vielere* or *harpere*, he who accompany'd the *chanterre*, when he did not perform himself, and would be call'd indifferently by either name, or the general one of *minstrel*, &c. A *histrion*, or *mimus*, should, properly, have been the buffoon of a play, as he was among the Romans: but these names, in fact, appear to have been given by affected pedants, who mistook their meaning. There were, likewise, *flutours*, *timbesteres*, and *fai-lours*, dancers, all three mention'd by Chaucer in employments. *Carping* seems synonymous to *singing*; though, it is say'd above,

“ The *minstrels* sing, the *jogelours* carpe:”

and may, therefor, imply *talking* or *reciting*.

Again, in *Chaucers Romant of the rose*, V. 764:

“ Ministrallis and eke *jogelours*.”

All, evidently and immediately from the Latin *joculator*. He is, however, in other places, repeatedly call'd a *jogelour*. Carpentier, says Warton, mentions a “ *joculator, qui scielat tombarē* ;” a *jugler* who knew how to tumble. (I, G.)

his translation of the *Romant of the rose*, V. 762, &c.

“ There mightist thou se these *flutours*  
*Minstrallis* and eke *jogelours*  
 That well to singin did ther paine—  
 There was many a *timbestere*,  
 And *sailours*, that i dare well swere  
 Ycothe ther craft full parfitly  
 The *timbris* up full subtilly  
 Thei castin, and hent them full oft  
 Upon a finger faire and soft.”

The *farceurs*, or buffoons, were, possibly, the proper *histriones* or *mimi*, who acted ridiculous and burlesque dramas of a single part, whence the term *farce* is stil use'd for a short and laughable entertainment; *baladins*, or *danceërs*; *tabourers*, or *tabereres*, who perform'd on the tabour or tabourin;\* and, peradventure, several other distinctions. All these, however, in process of time, appear to have been confounded under the common name of min-

\* In an old *fabliau*, in the Harleian MS. 2253, a minstrel setting out from London, and meeting the king,

“ *Entour son col porta foun tabour,*  
*Depeynt de or e riche acour.*”

The king, who addresses him with “*fire joglour*,” is treated with very little ceremony.

Fauchet remember'd to have seen Martin Baraton (then old minstrel of Orleans), who at feasts and nuptials bet a tabour (*tabourin*) of silver, set with plates also of silver, graveen with the armorial bearings of those whom he had taught to dance. (*Recueil*, P. 73.) “Here,” observes doctor Percy, “we see that a minstrel performed sometimes the function of a dancing-master.” (P. xlviii.)

strels or juglers, and by Latin writeers, *ministri*, *ministrilli*, *joculatores*, *histriones*, *mimi*, *leccatores*, *scurra*, *vaniloqui*, *citharistæ*, or *citharædæ*, *cantores*, or *cantatores*, *parasitæ*, *famelici*, *nebulones*, *epulones*, and the like. Their peculiar appellations, however, may, doubtless, have been preserve'd among themselves, without being much attended to by those who only consider'd them as a body of men whose profession was to please; or, at least, by their own corruption in lateer times, when one did all, and the whole system sunk into insignificance and contempt.

“ Sometimes,” says Fontenelle, “ during the repast of a prince, you would see arrive an unknown *trouverre*, with his minstrels or juglers, and make them sing, upon their harps or violins, the verses which he had compose'd: those who made the *sounds* as well as the *words* being the most esteem'd.”\*

Le Grand, having already spokeen of these troops of rambleing musicians, who in the great feasts, in the plenary courts, and at marriagees ran together to amuse the nobility, says, “ This profession, which misery, libertinism, and the vagabond life of this sort of people, have much decry'd, require'd, however, a multiplicity of attainments, and of talents, which one would, at this day, have some difficulty to find reuniteed, and who has much more right to be astonish'd, moreover, in the agees of ignorance: for, beside all the songs, old and new, beside the current anecdotes,

\* *Histoire du theatre.*

the tales, and *fabliaux*, which they pique'd themselves upon knowing; beside the romanceës of the time, which it behove'd them to know, and to possess in part, they could declaim, sing, compose in musick, play on several instruments and accompany them. Frequently, even, were they authours, and made themselves the pieceës which they utter'd. In fine, there were some who, to all these talents, join'd the science of the cork-balls, of jugglery, and of all the tricks known." \*

The following curious narrative of these singular characters is relateëd in an old *fabliau*: " Two troops of minstrels met in a castle, and wil'd to amuse the lord by a quarrel. One say'd he could tel tales (*conter*) in *Romance* (i. e. French) and *Latin*; he knew more than forty *lays* and *songs of geste*, and all the songs possible that you could imagine to ask of him. He knew, allso, the *romanceës of adventure*, and in particular those of the *Round table*. He knew, in fine, to SING a great many romanceës, such as *Vivien*, *Reynaud* [r. *Oger*] *le Danois*, &c. and to TEL *Floris* and *Blancheflower*. He finish'd the enumeration of his talents by some pleasantrys; and pretended that if he had takeën the profession he follow'd, it was not that he had not many others to procure him a considerable fortune: for he knew very wel to hoop an eg, to bleed the cats, to cup an ox, and cover houseës with omlets, &c. and if any one would give him two harps, he felt himself capable to make a musick



such as no one ever heard the like. At length, after some new injurys, he advise'd the minstrel whom he had attack'd to go out of the castle without being pray'd; despiseing him too much to dishonour himself and his comrades to strike a man so contemptible. This fellow undervalue'd him in his turn, and demanded of him how he dare'd to say he was a good minstrel who knew neither pleasant tales nor *dits*. For me, say'd he, i am not one of these ignoramuses whose whole talent is to play the cat, the fool, the drunken man, or to say foolish things to their comrades: i am of the number of these good *trouverres*, who invent all that they say:

“ *Ge suis juglere de viele;*

*Si fai de muse et de frestele,*

*Et de harpe, et de chiphonie*

*De la gigue, de l'armonie,*

*E el falteire, e en la rote.”\**

I know wel to sing a song; i know tales, i know *fabliaux*; i know to tel fine new *dits*; *rotruenges*† old and new; and satires (*sirvantes*) and pastorals; i know to bear counsel of love; and to make chaplets of flowers; and a girdle for loveërs; and to speak fine of courtesy.” After this detail of his talents, as the musician and fine fellow, he passes to those which he has for the tricks of dexterity, and the play of

\* “ I am a *jugler* of the *violin*,  
So know i of the *bagpipe*, and of the *freste*,  
And of the *harp*, and of the *symphony*,  
Of the *gig*, of the *harmony*,  
And of the *psaltery*, and on the *rote*.”

† A species of song sung to the rote.



the cork-ball: [*a song*] “ Wel know i the cork ball; and to make the beetle come, alive and dancing on the table; and so i know many a fair game of the table, and of dexterity and magick; wel i know to make an enchantment; i know to play with the cudgels; and so i know to play with the cutlases; and with the cord, and the rope.” He boasts himself to know all *the songs of gēsts* which the first knew: he knows all the good serjeants, and renown’d champions of his time; and the most celebrateēd minstrels, to whom he gives ridiculous nick-names. In fine, addresssing himself to his rival, he adviseēs him, if he have a little shame, never to enter into the placeēs where he shal know him: “ and you, sir,” says he, “ if i have spokeēn better than he, i pray you to put him out of doors, and thus prove to him that he is a sot.” \*

The musical instruments of the French minstrels were chiefly the *viele*,† the *clavicorde*, the *rote*,‡ the *tubour*, and others, it is probable, not onely to accompany the voice, but to perform sprightly airs, and exhilarate the lively dance.

\* Le Grand, B, 313, &c. Those who, in the north of Engleland, cheat the poor ignorant graziers, farmers, and horse-cofers, who come to the fair, by the delusion of the cork-ball, are call’d *thimbleērs*.

† Doctors Percy and Burney mistake this for the *rote* or *mandolin* (*Reliques*, I, lxxv); but that it was clearly the *violin* is prove’d by M. le Grand (*Fabliaux ou contes*, A, 49; B, 319). Fauchet writes it “ *viole*.”

‡ The *rote*, from *rota*, a wheel, in modern French *vielle*, and in vulgar English *hurdy-gurdy*, which is seen so frequently both in Paris and London in the hands of Savoyards.

None of the minstrel melodys, or chants, are suppose'd to be now existing, unless, it is possible, in some ancient manuscript of the French national library. Sainte Palaye, in fact, says that the beautiful tale of *Aucasin and Nicolette*, occurs in a MS. near 500 years old, and that what was precede'd by the words "*on chante*" was set to musick; but whether the poetical part be in the minstrel-metre does not clearly appear. The *chansons du chatelain de Coucy*, in 1200, likewise, *du roy de Navarre*, have been printed with the original musick. It is a plain chant, in square notes, ranged upon four lines, under the clif *C fol ut*. (*Fabliaux ou contes*, A, 48.)

Some idea of the dress or manners of a French minstrel in the fourteenth century may be conceive'd from the following anecdote: "A yonge man cam to a feste, where were many lordes, ladyes, and damoyfels, and arrayed as they wold have sette them to dyner, and had on hem a coote hardye after the maner of Almayne. He cam and salewed the lordes and ladyes, and whan he had done to them reverence, fyre Geffroy [de Lyege] called hym before hym, and demaunded hym where his *vyell* or *clavycordes* were, and that he should make his craft: and the yonge man ansuerd, Syre, i can not medle therwith. Haa, sayd the knyght, i can not byleve it; for ye be contrefaytted and clothed lyke a *mynystrell*." \*

\* *The booke of thenfeynementes and techynge that the knyght of the towre made to his daughters* (translate'd and printed by Caxton), C. 115.

“ Helgaud, the lord of Joinville, and other authors, remark,” according to Du Cange, “ that at these solemn feasts were made publick banquets where the kings ate in the presence of their whole suite, and were there serve’d by the great officers of the crown, and of the hotel,\* every one according to the function of his charge. There was with them the divertisements of the *minstrels* (“ *des menestrels ou des menetriers*”). Under this name were compris’d those who play’d with the *nakairs*, with the *demicanon*, with the *cornet*, with the *guiterne Latine*, with the *fluste Behaigne*, with the *trompette*, with the *guiterne Moresche*, and with the *vicille*; which are all name’d in an account of the hotel of the duke of Normandy and Guienne of the year 1348.” A curious species of concert, no doubt; though there be not a single minstrel of them who “ sings” to the harp songs of his own makeing. “ They had moreover,” he says, “ *farceurs, jongleurs* [*rectius* *jougleurs*] (*joculatores*), and *plaisantins*, who should divert the companys by their jokes and their comedys, for the entertainment of whom the kings, the princeës, and the simple lords, made such prodigious expenceës, that they gave occasion to Lambert *d’Ardres* and to the

\* This useful disyllable, *hostel*, we obtain’d from the French soon after the Norman conquest; and it remains with its old anglicis’d pronunciation, *hóstel*, in the university of Cambridge to this day: but, having become obsolete, for some centuries, in every other place, it has lately return’d to us *à la mode de la France moderne*, and is writen and pronounce’d *hotèl*.

cardinal James *de Vitry*, to inveigh against these superfluities of their time, which had ruin'd whole families: which St. Augustine had done before them, in these terms: “*Donare res suas histrionibus, vitium est immane, non virtus. Illa sanies Romæ recepta, & favoribus aucta, tandem collabefecit bonos mores, & civitates perdidit, coëgitque imperatores sæpius eos expellere.*”\*

With respect to the melody, or intonation, to which the French metrical romanceës, were usually sung, being accompany'd by some musical instrument, either in the hands of the finger, or in those of his companion, it is conjecture'd to have been little or nothing else than a sort of recitative or chant, the performer sustaining his voice, as the ingenious mister Walker has express'd it, “with arpeggios swept over the strings of his harp.”† Almost all

\* *Disfertation V. sur Joinville*, 161. Warton, who professes to give this very passage, and cites this very page, instead of 1348, says “before the year 1300.” The *nakair* he explains “the kettle-drum,” and the *demi-canon* “the flagellet;” for what reason does not appear. *Nacaires* is explained by Du Cange (*Observations sur l'histoire*, 59) to mean a kind of *tambour*, which is in use among the German cavalry, which the French call, vulgarly, *tymbales*. There was some essential difference, it may be fairly presume'd, between the *histriones* of king Philip de Valois time and those of St. Augustine. John of Salisbury reprobates those of his own age who, for the redeeming their fame, and extending their name, threw away their riches on “*histriones & mimos.*” (Epis. 247.)

† *Historical memoirs of the Irish bards*, P. 17. Cormac Common, a blind *fin-sgealaighthe*, or tale-teler of the modern Irish, living in 1786, at the age of 83, of whom this gentleman

the French poets, of the 12th and 13th century, according to M. Laborde, compose'd the airs of their songs, but these airs were nothing more than the Gregorian chant; and even it was often merely the chants of the church, which they parody'd."\* This kind of chant or recitative continue'd in use upon the French stage even to a late period. Voltaire, having observe'd it to be highly probable that the *Melopée*, regarded by Aristotle, in his *Poeticks*, as an essential part of tragedy, was an even and simple chant, like that of the *preface to the mass*, which is, in his opinion, the Gregorian chant, and not the Ambrosian, but which is a true *melopée*, adds, that "When the Italians revive'd tragedy in the sixteenth century, the recitation was a *melopée*, but which could not be note'd; for who can note inflexions of the voice, which are 18ths or 16ths of tone? they were learn'd by heart. This usage was receive'd in France, when the French began to form a theatre, above a century after the Italians. The *Sophonisba* of Mairet was chanted like that of Trissino, but more rudely. All the parts of the

has, in his appendix to that interesting work, inserted a curious account, did not, like the tale-teller mention'd by sir William Temple, chant his tales in an uninterrupted even tone: the monotony of his modulation was frequently broke'n by cadence's introduce'd with taste at the close of stanza. "In rehearsing any of Ossian's poems [which in Ireland are genuine and ancient], or any composition in verse, (says mister (now sir William) Ousley) he chants them pretty much in the manner of our cathedral-service." P. 57.

\* *Essai sur la musique*, II, 146 (note).

actors, but especially of the actresses, were noteëd *memoriter* by tradition. Mademoiselle Bauval, an actress of the time of Corneille, of Racine, and of Moliere, reciteëd to me, more than sixty years ago, the begining of the part of *Emilie* in *Cinna*, such as it had been deliver'd in the first representations by Beaupré.\* All this, it must be confess'd, wil not be apt to convey a very correct or perspicuous idea of the musical performanceës of a French minstrel; it is, nevertheless, by no means, improbable that there was a considerable degree of resemblance: but the misfortune is, that no historian or other writeër, who flourish'd in the time of the minstrels, has ever thought them deserveing of much attention. The author of *Gerard de Roussillon* says, at the commencement of his romance, that he has made it upon the model of *The song of Antioch*, that is, as Le Grand conceives, he wrote it in the same measure, and sung it to the same tune.†

About the commencement of the fifteenth century the profesion of minstrel was rapidly declining; and, before its expiration, was, to all appearance, totally extinct, except, it may be, in a few instances, where common fiddleërs, or the like, might retain the name. No metrical romance, however, appears to have been compose'd or sung in any part of France after the fourteenth century, nor is the least mention made, or notice takeën, of a profesion

\* *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, CHANT, Musique, &c.

† B, 317.



which had made so much noise in the kingdom during the three precedeing ones. The old rimeing romanceës had allready begun to be converted into prose; in which many others, upon the same or similar subjects, were now compose'd by a very different set of authours; many of whom, however, are not entirely devoid of merit; though Warton, with great reason, considers the change among the French as "a proof of the decay of invention." Most of these prose romanceës, after the invention of printing, made their appearance in large and beautiful folios and quartos, which are, at present, become very rare, but are stil eagerly pursue'd by collectors, and highly esteem'd by those who are fortunate enough to posses them. The national library, at Paris, is peculiarly rich in this species of literary treasure.

It, certainly, may be presume'd there were in the last age of the Saxon kingdom men who profess'd and exercise'd the minstrel-art. King Edgar, about the year 960, enjoin'd in one of his canons that no priest should be an *ale-drinker*, nor, in any wise, a *minstrel* (*gylpige*, Saxon, *scurra*, Latin, properly a parasite), either by himself, or with others;\* and, in his oration to St. Dunstan, grieves that the houseës of clerks were become a brothel of *whores*, and a *conciabulum* of *minstrels* (*histriones*); and says, in the same oration, that the *mimi*

\* Spelmans *Concilia*, I, 228.



SING and DANCE: \* this, however, is, most probably, a term of the historians time, and not of the kings, and, therefor, not of equal authority.

According to Ingulph, king Alfred, feigning himself to be a jugler (*joculatorem*), a harp being takeen up, went to the tents of the Danes; and being receive'd into the more secret placeës, learning all the secrets of his enemys, when he had satisfy'd his desire, unknown and safe, return'd to Athelney: and now, his army being collected, haveing suddenly attack'd, he slew his enemys with incredible slaughter. King Godrum (whom we call Gurmound) with a very great multitude of noblemen, and also of his people, takeen alive, receive'd baptism; and being takeen out of the sacred font by the king, was endow'd with East-Engleland, that is Norfolk, to inhabit with his people, by the royal gift. The rest refuseing to be baptize'd, Engleland being abjure'd, fought France in a ship.† This de-

\* Spelmans *Concilia*, I, 246.

† 26. William Malmesbury, who enlargeës this anecdote and differs in some respects from Ingulph, whom, however, it is certain he had made use of, being not onely a less ancient authority, but even adopting several of his words, which would not otherwise have occur'd to him. He, at the same time, describes Alfreds disguise as that of a mime or mimic (*mimus*), though, apparently, a synonymous term. So that Malmesbury, a very honest and faithful historian upon most occasions, is, in this, a mere copyist, and the eccho of Ingulphus. It is, certainly, a somewhat suspicious adventure. It is mention'd neither by Asfer, not onely the contemporary, but

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feat of the Danes, and subsequent baptism of Gormund, took place in the year 878.\*

also the chaplain, and confessor, and even the biographer, of Alfred, nor in the Saxon chronicle; nor by Henry of Huntingdon, nor Simcon of Durham, nor Roger de Hoveden, all of whom, however, notice the battle in which Godrun was defeated, and his final conversion; nor, in fact, by any other ancient, or authentick writeer, except the two already cited. It militates stil more forcibly against such a romantick and improbable incident, that a pious, warlike, honorable, and glorious monarch, who conquer'd his enemys, in the field and not by treachery, should assume the infamous character of a spy.† It is not less extraordinary, at the same time, that Geoffrey of Monmouth, the contemporary of Malmesbury, who never saw his book, has introduce'd a third actor of the same foolry, by the name of Baldulph, a Saxon, who, haveing been defeated by the Britons, under the command of Cadur duke of Cornwall, and anxious to relieve or speak with his brother Colgrin, who was besiege'd in York by Arthur, "shave'd his hair and beard, and took the habit with the harp of a jugler (*joculatoris*). Then, walking up and down within the camp, by the musical notes he compose'd on his lyre, he shew'd himself to be a harper: and when he was suspected of no man, he approach'd to the walls of the city, effecting his commence'd simulation by little and little. At last, when he was found by the besiege'd, he was drawn up by ropes within the walls, and

† If "the Anglo-Saxons had such strong prejudices against the minstrels," as is suppose'd in the *Essay on the English* ones, lxxii, is it at all probable that such a profession would have been permitted to exist among them. Neither Alfred, nor Anlaf, did any thing more than play on the harp.

• Asfer, 34; and the Saxon chronicle. The veracious Geoffrey, as we have already seen, makes this Gormund king of the *Africans*," who had arrive'd in Ireland with a very great fleet, and had subdue'd that country (B. 11, C. 8): this, too, may be one of the "many true events, that have escaped other annalists."

Athelstan, the son of Edward, began to reign in the year 924, and held the kingdom sixteen years.

conducted to his brother." (B. 9, C. 1).† Though, in reality, there is scarcely a single word of truth in this pretended history, yet every flagrant impostor is sure, at some time or other, to obtain belief, favour, and justification. "Although the above fact," according to a right reverend prelate, who mixes his romance with his history, it must be confess'd in a very pleasing and ingenious manner, especially for those who are quite indifferent to truth or falsehood, "comes only from the suspicious pen of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the judicious reader will not too hastily reject it; because, if such a fact really happen'd, it could only be known to us through the medium of British writeers;...and Geoffrey, with all his fables, is allow'd to have recorded many true events, that have escaped other annalists." (*Essay on the ancient minstrels*, xxvi.) Now, it is certain that this impudent forgeer, bishop as he was, live'd, according to his own fanciful chronology, about six hundred years after king Arthur; who, then, are "the British writeers," through whose "medium" these absurd and monstrous lyes "could only be known to us?" Is it Nennius? Is it Gildas? Is it any newly invented British historiographer, who has never yet been hear'd of? Who are they, likewise, if not fools, knaves, or madmen, who have follow'd this rank forgeer and impostour, "with all his fables,...to have recorded many true events that have escape'd other annalists?" Where is there any one such event to be found throughout his ample legend? and how, it is possible, with this inconsistent admission, that the "events recorded" by Geoffrey, "with all his fables," can be ascertain'd to be true?

† *Maistre Wace* adds a certain circumstance to *Geoffreys* account, which is very whimsical:

*"Al sege a lad cume jugelere,  
Si se feinst kil esteit harpere,  
Il aveit appris à chanter,  
E lais e notes à harper.  
Par aler parler à son frere.  
Si fist par mi la barbe rere,  
E le chef par me ensement  
E un des gernuns fulement  
Ben sembla lecheur e fol."*

Le Brut.

His last battle was with Analaf,\* the son of Sith-rick, who, in the hope of invadeing the realm, had pass'd over the boundarys : and Athelstan adviseedly yielding, that he might the more gloriously conquer him who now insulted, the youth, greatly dareing, and breathing in his mind illicit thoughts, had proceeded very far into Engleland, at length by the great skil of his generals, and great force of soldiers, was met at Bruneford.† He who discern'd so great a danger to impend, attempted a benefit by the art of a spy ; and, haveing put off his royal ensigns, and takeen in his hand a harp, proceeded to the tent of our king ; where, as he was singing before the doors, he would occasionally allso shake the strings with a sweet irregularity, he was easily admitted, professing himself a mine (or mimick, *minus*), who by such kind of art earn'd his dayly stipend. The king and his guests he, for some little time, gratify'd with his musical performance ; though, dureing his singing and playing, he examine'd all things with his eyes. After that satiety of eating had put an end to pleasures, and the severity of administering the war began afresh in the discourse of the peers ; he, being order'd to depart, receive'd

\* More correctly, it is conceived, *Aulaf*, or *Olave*. He is, however, generally called *Anlaf* by our ancient historians.

† Or *Brunanburgh*, a town upon the Humber, now unknown ; but certainly not, as Camden absurdly conjectures, *Bromeridge* in Northhumberland. Robert Mannyng says expressly,

“ At *Brunesburgh* on *Humber* thei gan tham asfaile.” P. 31.

the price of his song: which, loathing to carry away, he hid under him in the earth. This was observe'd by some one, who had formerly been a soldier, and immediately told it to Athelstan. He, blameing the man, for that he had not seize'd an enemy place'd before his eyes, receive'd this answer. "The same oath, which i lately, o king, made to thee, i formerly gave to Anlaf; which if thou had'st seen me violate in myself, thou might'st allso be ware of a like example regarding thyself. But deign to hear the advice of a servant, that thou remove thy tent hence, and, remaining in another place until the partys left shal come, thou wilt disappoint the enemy, petulantly insulting, by modest delay. The speech being approve'd, he thence departed."\*

After all, it is highly probable that those three anecdotes of Baldulph, Alfred, and Anlaf, have been derive'd and improve'd from a story relate'd by *Saxo-Grammaticus*; the Danish historian, who dye'd in 1204, upon the authority, no doubt, of

\* W. of Malmesbury, 48. Anlaf, unconscious of the change which has takeen place in the situation of the kings tent, makes his attempt in the night, and slays the whole family he found in the place where he had perform'd his minstrelsy and been entertain'd. He then penetrates to the real tent of Athelstan, who was indulging in rest; and making what exertions he was able, his sword falls out of the sheath, he is relieve'd by a miracle, and in the morning obtains a decisive victory. The whole story, therefor, is nothing more than a legend and a lye.



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some ancient *saga*, concerning an adventure of Hother, king of Sweden and Denmark, who, at a certain time, as he was hunting, misled by the error of a cloud, fell into the cave of the sylvestrian virgins, of whom, being saluted by his own name, he enquire'd who they were. These virgins affirm'd, that, by their conduct and their auspices, they chiefly govern'd the fortune of wars. For oftentimes were they present in battles, seen by no man, to afford by secret aids, the wish'd-for successes to their friends; \* and exhorting him not to harass Balder, the son of Othin, (although worthy of the most deadly hatred,) by arms; affirming him to be a demi-god, procreate'd by the secret seed of superior beings. These things being receive'd, Hother, in a swoon, by the roof of the falling house, beheld himself in the open air, and destitute of all cover, expos'd on a sudden in the midst of fields. But he, chiefly, wonder'd at the swift flight of the damsels, and the versatile site of the place, and the delusive figure of the house. For he was ignorant that the things which had been done about him were nothing but mockery, and the vain device of juggling arts. But Hother, harass'd by his unfortunate wars with Balder, having wander'd into remote and devious ways of places, and pass'd through a forest unaccustom'd to mortals, found the cave inhabited, peradventure, by the unknown

\* These nymphs seem to have been the *valkyriur* of the *Edda*, and the three weird (or wizard) sisters of Macbeth.

virgins. They appear'd to be the same who had, formerly, given him an impenetrable vest: by whom, being ask'd why he came thither of all placeës, he declare'd the fatal events of the war. Therefor, their faith being condemn'd (or, their promise violate'd), he began to bewail the fortune and sorrowful chanceës of things unhappily conducted. But the nymphs say'd that he himself, although he were rarely victor, nevertheless pour'd-in equal mischief upon the enemys, nor had he been the authour of less slaughter than his accomplice. Thenceforeward the grace of the victory in readiness would be his, if he could snatch a meat of a certain unusual sweetness, invented to augment the force of Balder. For nothing to be done would be difficult, so long as he should enjoy the victuals destin'd to the enemy for the augmentation of his strength.

Therefor arriveing at the camp of the enemys, he knew that the three nymphs, bearers of the secret meat, had departed from the camp of Balder: whom, hastily following, (for their footsteps in the dew betray'd their flight,) he, at length, came to the houseës, to which they had accustom'd themselves. Therefor, being ask'd by these nymphs what he was, he say'd he was a harper. Nor was the experiment dissonant to his profession: for, tuneing the harp he had brought, with inflected strings, to a song, and the chords being compose'd by the quill, he pour'd forth a melody grateful to the ears by the most prompt modulation. As to the rest, three female



snakes were with them, with the poison whereof they were wont to make a dish of solidative confection for Balder : and much poison now flow'd from the open jaws of the snakes. But some of the nymphs, allso, studious of humanity, would have acquainted Hother with the meat, if the chief of the three had not forbid it, protesting that a fraud would be done to Balder, if they should augment his very enemy with the increase of corporeal strength. He say'd he was not Hother, but a companion of Hother : and, therefor, these nymphs gave him a girdle of exquisite splendour, and the potent zone of victory.

On a future day Balder renew'd the battle, and, the third being elapse'd, too much excruciateed with the wound he had before receive'd, was utterly destroy'd.\*

In the time of William the conquerour, Berdic, the kings jugler (*joculator regius*), had three vils, and there five carucates, in Gloucestershire, without rent : † but the nature of his office or employment is not ascertain'd ; nor does the existence of this man, after the conquest, afford any proof “ that the minstrel was a regular and stateed officer in the court of our Anglo-Saxon kings.” ‡ Though the minstrels are, elsewhere, say'd to have been consider'd in a very unfavorable light “ by the Anglo-Saxon clergy.” †

\* *Historia Danica*, L. 3, P. 39, 43.

† Domesday book, fo. 162, co. 1.

‡ *Reliques*, I, xxviii.

‡ *Ili.* lv (edition 1775.)

One Royer, or Raher, the first founder of the hospital of St. Bartholomew, in London, is design'd by Leland, the mime, or mimick (*mimus*); of king Henry the first;\* and that *mimus* is properly a minstrel, is prove'd by an extract in the *History of English poetry*, † from the accounts of the priory of Maxtock near Coventry, in 1441: “*Dat. sex Mimiis domini Clynton cantantibus, citharisantibus, ludentibus, &c. iiii. l.*” In his legend, cite'd by doctor Percy, from the *Monasticon*, “his minstrel profesion,” it appears, “is not mention'd: there is only a general indistinct account that he frequented royal and noble house's, where he ingratiate'd himself *suavitate joculari*.” ‡ Hence Stow, who cites no authority, describes him as “a man of a singular and pleasant wit, and therefore of many called the kings jester or minstrel;” † and Deloné, in the *History of Thomas of Reading*, says that he “was a great musician, and kept a company of MINSTRELS, *i. e.* FIDDLERS, who played with silver bows.” §

King Henry may have had a harper name'd Galfrid or Jeffrey, who, in 1180, receive'd a corrody or annuity from the abbey of Hyde: but, as we by no means know that “in the early times every harper

\* Lelands *Collectanea*, I, 61, 112. In another part of the same work is this entry: “*Prioratus S. Bartholomæi de Smethefeld. Henricus I. fundator procurante Raherio, ejus fidei CLERICO*” (*Ibi.* 99).

† II, 109, n. q.

‡ *Reliques*, I, lxxxii.

§ *Annales*, 1592, 186; *Survey*, 1598, 308.

§ Hawkins, III, 85.

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was expected to sing," we may reasonably doubt that this reward was given him for his songs as well as for his musick;\* and still more that it was "undoubtedly on condition that he should serve the monks in the profession of a harper on public occasions."†

To shew what John of Salisbury, in the reign of king Henry the second, thought of this numerous body of men, it will be necessary to adduce his own words, and, for certain nameless reasons, after the laudable example of the worthy historian of English poetry, who has furnish'd us with the extract, to give them in Latin. "*At cam [desidiam]*" says he, "*nostris prorogant histriones. Admissa sunt ergo spectacula, et infinita lenocinia vanitatis.—Hinc mimi, salii, vel saliares, balatrones, æmiliani, gladiatores, palæstritæ, gignadii, præstigiatores, malefici quoque multi, et tota jocularum scena procedit. Quorum adeo error invaluit, ut à præclaris domibus non arcantur etiam illi, qui obscænis partibus corporis, oculis omnium cam ingerunt turpitudinem, quam erubescet videre vel cynicus. Quodque magis mirere, nec tunc ejiciuntur, quando TUMULTUANTES INFERIUS crebro sonitu aërem fœdant, et turpiter inclusum turpius produnt."*‡

In the reign of this king, William, surname'd Longchamp, a Frenchman, bishop of Ely, or his chancellor, great justiciary, and, according to the

\* *Reliques*, &c. I, xxvii.

† Warton, I, 92.

‡ II, 205, n.

language of modern times, prime-minister, who did not understand a word of English, and was a monster of vice and iniquity, "to the augmentation," as we learn from a contemporary epistle of Hugh bishop of Coventry, "and fame of his name, purchase'd beg'd songs, and adulatory rimes; and had entice'd, with rewards, out of the kingdom of France fingers and juglers, that they might sing of him in the streets: and now was it every where say'd, that there was not such a one in the world." \*

Geoffrey of Vinefauf says that when Richard arrive'd at the Christian camp before Ptolemais, he was receive'd with POPULAR SONGS (*populares cantiones*), which recite'd THE FAMOUS GESTS OF THE ANCIENTS (*antiquorum præclara gesta*). † These, apparently, were parts of metrical romances, and must have been in French.

Ela the wife of William Longespee the first was born at Ambresbury, her father and mother being Normans. Her father, therefor, being decay'd with old age, migrate'd to Christ, in the year of the lord 1196; her mother dyed two years before....In the mean time the most dear lady was secretly by her relations convey'd into Normandy, and there brought up under safe and straight custody. In the

\* Benedictus, 702. Mister Warton, who, at first, mistook this act of William bishop of Ely, for that of the king himself, a mistake which the more accurate Tyrwhitt taught him to correct, ads, of his own accord, that "These gratuities were chiefly arms, cloaths, horses, and sometimes money." (I, 113, II, 62, b.)

† Warton, I, 62, b.

same time in England was a certain knight, by name William Talbot, who assume'd the habit of a pilgrim, pass'd over into Normandy and stayed for two years, wandering here and there, to find out the lady Ela of Salisbury: and she being found, he put off the habit of a pilgrim, and dress'd himself as if he were a harper, and enter'd the court where she stay'd: and as he was a jocosé man, wel skil'd in the *gests*\* of the ancients, he was there kindly receive'd as an inmate: and when he found a fit time, he returned into England, haveing with him that worshipful lady Ela, heiress of the county of Salisbury; and presented her to king Richard: and he most joyfully took her, and marry'd her to his brother William Longespee." †

The anecdote relateëd by doctor Powell, "who," according to bishop Percy, "is known to have followed ancient Welsh MSS." which, at the same time, he neither quotes nor pretends to, and, after him, by Camden, and sir William Dugdale, is not to be rely'd on, it being better known that the Welsh have no such MSS. except Caradoc, who

\* *Gesta*, romanceës. Doctor Percy has strangely confounded the *gests* of the minstrels with those of the sovereign in his progresses, the word, he says, haveing at length come "to signify adventures or incidents in general." (1, clii.) This is amazingly ridiculous; as it is wel known, that when our kings use'd to travel, the *gest* (*giste*, F) was the resting-place for every night, of which the whole party was to be apprise'd. Charles I. seems to have been the last of them who proceeded by *gests*.

† Vincents *Discovery of errors*, &c. 445, &c.



was dead before it hapen'd, as containing misrepresentation and falsehood; fir Peter Leycester, who cites an ancient parchment roll, writen above two hundred years before, gives the story thus: “ Randle [the third, surname'd Blundevill, earl of Chester], among the many conflicts he had with the Welsh, was force'd to retreat to the castle of Rothe-lent in Flintshire, about the reign of king John, where they besiege'd him: he presently sent to his constable of Cheshire, Roger Lacy, ‘ surname'd *Hell*,’ for his fierce spirit, that he would come with all speed, and bring what forces he could towards his relief. Roger, having gathered a tumultuous rout of *fidlers*, *players*, *coblers*, *debauched persons*, both men and women, out of the city of Chester (for 'twas then the fair-time in that city),—marcheth immediately towards the earl. The Welsh perceiving a great multitude coming, raise'd their siege and fled. The earl, coming back with his constable to Chester, gave him power over all the *fidlers* and *shoemakers* in Chester, in reward and memory of this service. The constable retain'd to himself and his heirs, the authority and donation of the *shoemakers*, but confer'd the authority of the *fidlers* and *players* on his steward, which then was *Dutton* of *Dutton*, whose heirs enjoy the same power and authority over the minstrelcy of Cheshire even to this day; who in memory hereof keep a yearly court upon the feast of St. John Baptist at Chester, where all the minstrels of the county and city are

to attend and play before the lord of Dutton, &c.”\* After all, it is to be wish’d we could have had coeval authority for so interesting an event. Doctor Percy, who has work’d it up, with his usual eloquence and ingenuity, into a fine minstrel story, says, “These men [MINSTRELS, he calls them, assemble’d at Chester fair] LIKE SO MANY TYR-  
TÆUS’S, BY THEIR MUSIC AND THEIR SONGS SO ALLURED AND INSPIRED the multitudes of loose and lawless persons then brought together, that they resolutely marched against the Welsh.” This, to be sure, as a beautiful hyperbolé, might have properly remain’d, “had not,” in his lordship’s own language, “all confidence been destroyed,”† by its being printed between inverted commas as the genuine words of sir William Dugdale, whom he actually quotes in the margin: in consequence of which detection, his lordship has been so ingenuous, as, in the last edition, to suppress the whole passage. There may, however, have been some foundation for the above narrative, as the worthy baronet has inserted the original charter of John constable of Chester, by which he gave, says he, “*dedi & concessi, & hac presenti charta confirmavi, Hugoni de Dutton, & hæredibus suis, magistratum omnium LECCATORUM & MERETRICUM totius Cester-shiræ, sicut liberius illum magistratum tenco de comite.*” These leccatores, it seems,

\* *Historical antiquities*, 141.

† See *Reliques*, &c. I, xxxi, &c.



which sir Peter translates *letchers*, may, upon the authority of Du Cange, stil mean *minstrels*; and, from the company they are here found in, it is very properly apply'd. It is not, however, very probable that these *letchers* (or *minstrels* if it must be), with *fiddles* at their necks, instead of *bils*, and accompany'd by a parcel of prostitutes, would or could have gone to attack a body of Welshmen, who had allready put to flight the noble and valiant earl of Chester, among whose gallant actions recorded in the old rimes mention'd by the authour of *Piers Plowman*,\* this may be one.

It appears, in fact, that, in the fourteenth year of king Henry the seventh, “ a *quo warranto* was brought against Laurence Dutton of Dutton, esquire, why he claimed all the *minstrels* of Cheshire, and in the city of Chester, to meet him at Chester yearly, at the feast of saint John Baptist, and to give unto him at the said feast four bottles of wine and a lance; and also every *minstrel* to pay unto him at the said feast fourpencehalfpenny; and why he claimed from every *whore*, *officium suum exercente*, four pence, to be paid yearly at the feast aforesaid: whereunto he pleaded prescription.” †

At the court held annually for the manor of Dutton, the steward haveing call'd every *minstrel*, and impanel'd a jury, charge'd them to enquire, Whether any man of that profesion had exercise'd

\* “ I can rimes of Robin Hood, and Randal earl of Chester.”

† *Ibi.* 142.

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*his instrument* without license from the lord of the court, &c."\*

Dugdale, who describes the congress of all the minstrels of Cheshire at Midsummer, and the procession of these minstrels "two and two, and playing on their several sorts of musical instruments," says not a word of their songs.

"Forthwith came John of Rampayne, and saw Foukes make such sorrow. "Sir," say'd he, "suffer this sorrow to depart, and, if it please god, before to-morrow prime, you shal hear good news of sir Audulf de Bracy, for i myself will go to speak to the king. John of Rampayne knew enough of the *tabour*, the *harp*, *violin*, *fitole*, and *juglery*, so he drew much abundantly with earl or baron; and cause'd stain his hair and his whole body entirely as black as jet, so that nothing was white but his teeth; and cause'd hang about his neck a very handsome *tabour*; afterward he mounted a fair palfrey, and rode toward the town of Salisbury, as far as the gate of the castle. John came before the king, and put himself on his knees, and saluteed the king very courteously; the king return'd him his salutes, and ask'd him whence he was. "Sire," say'd he, "i am an Ethiopian minstrel, born in Ethiopia." Say'd the king, "Are all the people of your country of your colour." "Yes, my lord, man and woman." "What say they in those strange realms of me?" "Sire," say'd he, "you are the

\* *Kings Vale royal of England*, 29.

most renown'd king of all Christendom; and for your great renown am i come to see you." "Fair fir," say'd the king, "welcome." "Sir, my lord, many thanks." (John say'd that he was renown'd more for his badness than his bounty; but the king could not understand him.) John made that day many a minstrelsy with tabour and other instruments. When the king was gone to bed, he made sir Henry de Audeley go for to see the minstrel, and he led him into his chamber, and they made great melody: and, when sir Henry had wel drunk, then he say'd to a varlet, "Go seek fir Audulf de Bracy, whom the king wil slay tomorrow, for he shal have a good night before his death. The varlet soon brought sir Audulf into his chamber, then they talk'd and play'd. John commence'd a song which sir Audulf use'd to sing. Sir Audulf raise'd his head, so he regarded in the middle his visage, and with great difficulty knew him. Sir Henry ask'd to drink. John was very serviceable, dance'd lightly on his feet, and before all serve'd of the cup. John was brisk, cast a powder in the cup, that no one perceiv'd him, for he was a good juggler, and all that drank became so sleepy, that, very soon after the draught, they lay down to sleep; and, when all were asleep, John took a fool that the king had, so he put him between the two knights, that they might save sir Audulf. John and sir Audulf took the towels and sheets that were in the chamber, and by a window toward the Severne

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they escape'd, and went on toward Blanchemolt, which is twelve leagues from Salisbury.\*

On the marriage of king Henry the third with Eleanor of Provence, in 1236, such a multitude of nobles of each sex, such a number of religious, such a populousness of the commons, such a variety of *histriones* (musicians, it is presume'd), assemble'd, that scarcely could the city of London contain them in her capacious bosom.†

We meet with no other anecdote of the minstrels during the reigns of John, (unless it be the romance of Fulco-Fitz-Warin already notice'd), nor any at all in that of his son Henry, or his grandson Edward. The last, indeed, when prince, and in the holy land, appears to have had a harper among his servants, who, on his masters attempted assassination, and even after the king himself had slain the assassin, had the singular courage to brain a dead man with a trivet, or *tripod*, for which act of heroism he was justly reprimanded by Edward.‡ It may be, likewise, observe'd that *The geste of kyng Horn* was, apparently, written in this reign.

\* Kings MSS. 12 C XII.

† M. Paris, P. 335.

‡ Walter Hemingford (Gale), 591.<sup>1</sup> Robert of Brunne, however, tells us, that Edward himself *rauht* the *trestille*, “ als his romance sais:” adding,

“ The Sarazin so he smote, in the hede, with that *treste*,

That brayn and blode alle hote, and igen alle out, gan breft.”

According to doctor Percy, Hemingford live'd in the time of Edward I (*Reliques*, III, xl); which, if living implies writing,

His son, Edward the second, was much addicted to buffoons, singers, tragedians, waggoners, ditchers, rowers, failers, and other such low company :† under some or one of which respectable designations are, doubtless, includeed minstrels and juglers. Adam Davie, the author of *Alisaunder*, a romance of great merit, and of considerable length, was marshal of Stratford-le-bow at the same period.

Seventy shillings were expended on minstrels, who accompany'd their songs with the harp, at the feast of the installation of Ralph abbot of St. Augustins at Canterbury, in the year 1309. At this magnificent solemnity, six thousand guests were present in and about the hall of the abbey.\*

In the year 1217 the king celebrateed the feast of Pentecost in the great hall of Westminster, where, as he royally sat at table, the princees of his realm being present, there enter'd a certain woman adorn'd with the habit of a minstrel (*histrio*), sitting upon a good horse, caparison'd jugler-wise, who went round

is somewhat unlikely, as he live'd to write the life of that monarchs grandson, and did not dye, as Bale hath it, before 1347, 40 years after the death of Edward I. and 70 from the event in question. Matthew Paris, likewise, who relates the story, and certainly wrote about the time, has made no mention of the harper. There appears to have been some metrical narrative, either in French or English, of Edwards expedition to the holy land; as Robert of Brunne says of the assassin:

“To, i wene he lauht, als his *romance* says.” P. 229.

Warton, by one of his habitual blunders, asserts “the *harper*... killed the assassin.” (II, fig. b 2, b).

\* H. de Knyghton, Co. 2532.

† Warton, I, 89.



the tables in the manner of jugglers, and at length ascended by the steps to the kings table, and put a certain letter before the king, and pulling back the rein (haveing saluted those everywhere sitting), as she had come, so she departed. The king, however, cause'd the letter to be open'd, that he might know its tenor, which in sense was such: "The lord the king too uncourtly hath regarded his knights, who, in his fathers time and his own, expose'd themselves to several dangers, and, for their honour, either lost or diminish'd their substance; and too abundantly enrich'd others, who never bore the burthen of busyness." These words being hear'd, the guests, regarding each other, wonder'd at so great feminine boldness, and severely blame'd the porters or door-keepers that they had permitted her to enter; who, excusing themselves, answer'd, that it was not the custom of the kings house that jugglers should, in any wise, be prohibited from entry, and especially in such great solemnitys, or feast-days. It was, therefor, sent to seek the woman, who was easely found, takeen, and committed to prison, and was force'd to tel why she had so done, and answer'd the truth, that she had been induce'd to do it by a certain knight for an adequate reward. Then the knight was sought, found, takeen, and led before the king, and examine'd upon the premisfes; who, nothing at all fearing, boldly confess'd that he was authour of the letter, and had done it for the kings

honour. The say'd knight, therefor, by his constancy, obtain'd the kings favour, with abundant gifts, and liberatēd the young woman from prison.\* This was, manifestly, a woman prank'd up like a minstrel, not a real one, for, notwithstanding the pains doctor Percy has takeēn to prove that some ladys, in former times, play'd upon the harp, as many do at this day, there is no instance to be found of their doing it, as a minstrel, in publick and for the sake of reward, nor of their being call'd female *minstrels* or *harpers*. Neither can this be fairly infer'd from the female terminations of *jenglereffe* (which is very suspicious), *joculatrix*, *ministrallissa*, *fæmina ministralis*, &c. unless it were known in what sense the word was use'd, and whether this female minstrel sung to the harp verse's of her own composeing, or compose'd by others, or what particular branch of minstrelsy she exercise'd. That there were women who *dancē'd* and *tumble'd*, is manifest from Chaucer :

“ And right anon in comen *tombeskeres*.”

So, again, in *The testament of love* (Urrys edition, 493, a): “ his dame was a *tombystere* ;” which seems properly explain'd in mister Thomases *Glossary*, “ A TUMBLER, a woman-dancer, or stage-player.” Mister Tyrwhitt, who derives the word from the Saxon, *tumban* to dance, explains it “ A dancing-woman,” or “ Women-dancers.” The fol-

\* T. Walsingham, 109.



lowing passage, however, from the ancient *Roman de Perceval*, will put the existence of female dancers and tumblers out of all doubt:

“ *Harper y faisoit harpeors,  
Et vieler vieleors,  
Et les baleresses baler,  
Et LES TUMBERESSES TUMBER.*”

The *baleresses*, or female danceers, are here plainly distinguish'd from the *tumbereffes*, which, therefor, cannot have the same identical meaning; and *Tomber*, in *Cotgraves Dictionary*, is explain'd to *fall*, or *tumble-down*, and refers from *Tumber* to *Tomber*.

When Adam de Orleton, bishop of Winchester, visited his cathedral priory of St. Swithin in that city, a jugler, name'd Herbert, sung *The song of Colbrond*, and also *The gest of queen Emma*, delivered from the plough-shares, in the hall of the prior, Alexander de Herriard, in 1338.\*

At the feast of Pentecost, which king Henry the fifth celebrate'd, in 1416, having the emperour and the duke of Holland for his guests, he order'd rich gowns for sixteen of his minstrels: and, having before his death orally granted an annuity of one hundred shillings to each of his minstrels, the grant was confirm'd in the first year of his son, Henry VI. and payment order'd out of the Exchequer.† Men

\* Warton, I, 89.

† *Reliques*, I, xlv, from *Rymers Fadera*.

thus distinguish'd by such singular marks of royal favour must have been in some office about the king's person very different from that of singers or performers of instrumental music.

The commission issue'd in 1456, "for impressing *boys* or *youths*, to supply vacancies by death among the king's minstrels,"\* sufficiently proves that by the latter we are to understand the singing men in the chapel-royal. This idea is confirm'd by Tusser :

"Thence for my voice, i must (no choice)

Away of forse, like posting horse,  
For fundrie men had placards then

Such child to take :

The better brest, the lesser rest,  
To serve thè queere, now there now heere,  
For time so spent, i may repent,

And sorrow make."

In the margin he calls these *placards* "singing mens commissions."

That "minstrels sometimes assisted at divine service," appears from the charter of Edward IV. for creating a fraternity or guild of those persons ; in which it is recited to be their duty "to sing in the king's chapel, and particularly for the departed souls of the king and queen when they shall die, &c."† There are such kind of minstrels in it to this day, though they have long ago lost the name.

Lydgate, in a passage of his poem intituled *Refon*

\* *Reliques*, xlii and lvii.

† *Ibi*. I, lv.

and *Sensualitie*, as quoteëd by Warton, enumerates a variety of entertainments comprehended under the name of minstrelsy :

“ Of all maner of *mynstralcy*  
That any man kan specifye :  
For there were *rotys* of Almayne,  
And eke of Arragon and Spayne :  
*Songes, stampes*, and eke *daunces*,  
Divers plenté of *plefaunces* ;  
And many unkouth *notys* newe  
Of swiche folke as lovid trewe ;  
And instrumentys that did excelle,  
Many moo than i kan telle :  
*Harpys, fythales*, and eke *rotys*,  
Well according with her *notys*,  
*Lutys, ribibles*, and *geternes*,  
More for estatys than tavernes ;  
*Orguys, citolis, monacordys*.—  
‘There were *trumpes*, and *trumpettes*,  
Lowde ‘*shalmys*,’ and *doucettes*.’\* ”

The instruments of the Engleish minstrels appear to have been the harp, fiddle, † bagpipe, pipe and

\* *History of E. Poetry*, II, 225, n. x. “ *Orguys* is *organs*.”

† In the life of St. Christopher, as quoteëd by Warton (I, 17) from an ancient MS. in the Bodleian library (Laud, L. 70), is this pasage:

—“ Cristofre hym served longe ;

The kyng loved melodye much of *FITHLE* and of *songe*,  
So that his *TOGELER* on a dai biforen him gon to play faste,  
And in a time he nemped in his song the devil at laste.”

tabour, cittern, hurdy-gurdy, bladder (or cannister) and string,\* and, possibly, the Jews-harp,† and a variety of vulgar inventions, the nature and name of which have long since perish'd. Little notice can be aded, to that which has been already given of the French minstrels, of their melody or musick; not a single particle of any one romance in English metre, being found accompany'd with musical notes: though it is possible that the chants of the few minstrel-songs already mention'd may be preserve'd by vocal or vulgar tradition, that of *John Dory* alone being found in printed characters. All, in short, that is known of the minstrel-musick of this country, is that it was very unrythmical or irregular. "Your ordinarie rimers," says Puttenham, "use very much their measures in the odde, as nine and eleven, and the sharpe accent upon the

\* A venerable old man, the melancholy representative of an ancient minstrel, appear'd a few years ago in London streets, with a *cannister and string*, which he call'd a *humstrum*, and chanted to it the old minstrel-ballad of *Lord Thomas and fair Eleanor*: but, having, it would seem, survive'd his minstrel talents, and

" . . . "Forgot his epick, nay pindarick art,"

he was afterward seen beging. The death of a person of this description, well known in Derbyshire, was, about the same time, announce'd in the papers.

† Henry Chettle says, "There is another *jugler*, that being well skild in the *Jewes trumpe*, takes upon him to bee a dealer in *musicke*: especiall good at mending instruments." *Kind-Harts dreame*, fig. F 46.

last syllable, which, therefore, makes him go lill-favouredly, and like a MINSTRELS musicke." \*

"The minstrels," as doctor Percy observes; "seem to have been in many respects upon the same footing as the heralds: and the king of the minstrels; like the king at arms, was both here and on the continent an usual officer in the courts of princes! Thus we have in the reign of K. Edward I. mention of a king Robert, and others: and in 16 Edw: III. is a grant to William de Morlee "the king's minstrel, stile'd *Roy de North*," of houses which had belonged to another king John le Boteler." Rymer hath also printed a licence granted by K. Richard II. in 1387, to John Caunz, the king of his minstrels, to pass the seas. †

The "minstrells" of the kings household, in the time of Edward III. were "trompeters, cytelers, pypers, tabrete, mabriers, clarions, fedelers, wayghtes." ‡

Those of king Edward IV. were musicians, "whereof some, 'were' *trompets*, some, with the *shalmes* and *finalle pypes*, and some, strange mene coming to the court at [the] fyve feastes of the year, and then take their wages...after iiij. d. ob. by day, &c. §

\* *Arte of English poeſie*, 1569, P. 59.

† *Reliques*, I, xliii.

‡ Hawkinses *History of Muſic*, II, 107. *Wayghtes* were players on the hautboy or other pipes during the night, as they are in many places at this day. See 291.

§ *Ibi*, 290.

The “mynstrals” of the earl of Northumberland, in the time of king Henry VIII. were no more than “a *taberet*, a *luyte*, and a *rebec*.”\*

Among the household musicians of king Edward VI. are enumerateed “*harpers, fingers, MINSTRELLES* ;”† what was the peculiar office of the last does not appear ; but it must be evident, that they were neither *fingers* nor *harpers*.

In the feast of Alwyn the bishop, and durement *pietancia* in the hall of the convent of St. Swithin, Winchester, six minstrels, with four harpers, made their minstrelsys : and after supper in the great bow’d chamber of the lord prior, sang the same gest ; in which chamber was suspended, as was the custom, the great arras of the prior, haveing the pictures of the three kings of Cologne.‡

In an account-roll of the priory of Bicester, in Oxfordshire, mister Warton found a parallel instance under the year 1432, by which it appears that four shillings were giveen to six minstrels of Buckingham, singing in the refectory *The martyrdom of the seven sleepers*, in the feast of the Epiphany.†

In the fourth year of king Richard the second (1380), John king of Castille and Leon, duke of Lancaster, by a charter in the French tongue, ordain’d, constituteed and assign’d his wel belove’d

\* *Reliques*, I, lxxiv.

† *Hawkins*, III, 479.

‡ *Registr. Priorat. S. Swithini Winton.* quoted in the *History of English poetry*, II, 174, n. m.

‡ II, 175.



N. N. *the king of the minstrels* within his honour of Tutbury, which now is or who for the time shal be to take and arrest all the *minstrels* within his fame, honour and franchise, who refuse'd to do their services and minstrelsy to them appertaining to do from ancient time at Tutbury aforesay'd, annually the day of the asumption of our lady : giving and granting to the say'd king of the minstrels for the time being full power and command to make them do reasonably, justify and constrain to do their servicees and minstrelsys in manner as belongs, and as it there has been use'd and from ancient times accustomed.\* These minstrels, like those in Cheshire, appear to have been a very disorderly and licentious set of men, who require'd a court of justice to keep them in order. Plot, who was a spectator of their procession in the reign of Charles the second, thus describes it : " On the court-day, or morrow of the asumption, what time all the *minstrels* within the honor come first to the bayliff's house, where the steward or his deputy meeting them, they all goe from thence to the parish-church of Tutbury, two and two together, *musick playing before them, the king of the minstrells* for the year past walking between the steward and bayliff, &c."†

One of the articles of enquiry in the stewards charge to the inquest, was whether any of the minstrels within the honour had " abuse'd or dispa-

\* Blounts *Law-dictionary*, King of the minstrels.

† *Natural history of Staffordshire*, 437.



rage'd their honorable profesſion, by drunkenneſs, profane curſing or ſwearing, SINGING LEWD OR OBSCENE SONGS, &c." which is all the information we can obtain of their minſtrel talents.

There was a cuſtom in this manor that the *minſtrels* who came to matins thither on the feaſt of the aſſumption ſhould have a bul giveen them by the prior of Tutbury, if they could take him on that ſide of the river Dove which is next Tutbury; or elſe the prior ſhould give them forty pence; for the enjoyment of which cuſtom they were to give to the lord at that feaſt twenty. This bul, being, by inexpressible barbaritys, "rendered as mad as 'tis poſſible for him to be," was turn'd out of the abbey-gate where theſe reſpectable perſonagees, "who ſubſiſted by the arts of poetry and muſic; and ſang to the harp verſes compoſe'd by themſelves, or others," were waiting to ſatiate their ſavage cruelty; and, if they could take this poor mutilateed animal, and hold him ſo long as to cut off ſome of his hair, the bul was brought to the bailifs houſe, "and there collar'd and roap't, and ſo brought to the bull-ring in the high-ſtreet, and there baited with doggs!"\*

The worthy and pious editor of *The reliques of ancient English poetry* obſerves with a *Nota bene* that "The barbarous diverſion of bull-running was no part of the original inſtitution, &c. as is fully proved by the reverend Dr. Pegge in *Archæologia*,

\* Plots *Natural hiſtory of Staffordſhire*, 437, 439.

Vol. II. No. XIII. page 80." But whether part of "the *original* institution" or not, it was practis'd by these infamous fiddlers or ballad-singers (whom that editor is desirous to treat with so much delicacy and respect) for upward of three hundred years, at the least, being confirm'd by *insperimus* in the time of king Henry the sixth, and having continu'd, to the disgrace and infamy of those who were concern'd in it, down to the year 1778, when the minstrel-court, bul-baiting, &c. were abolish'd by the duke of Devonshire, lessee of the honor.\*

By an order of the chancellor of the Duchy-court, date'd the 10th of May in the 6th year of Charles the first, (amongst other orders to the like purpose's,) "*Item*, it is ordered, that noe person shall use, or exercise, the art and science of musicke within the counties of Stafford and Darbie, as a common musician or mynstrell *for benefit and gayne*, except he have served or beene brought up in the same art and science, by the space of seaven yeeres, and be allowed and admitted so to doe at the said court called the mynstrells court by the jurye of the said court for the tyme beeing, or the greater parte of them, beinge xii in number, by the consent of the steward of the said court, for the tyme beeing, on payne to forfeit, for every month, that he shall so use, or exercise the said art, or scyence—iii s. iiij d."

\* See the new edition of Blounts *Ancient tenures*, by Beckwith, 313.

“What feast, i pray,” exclaims Thomas of Elmham, describing the coronation of king Henry the fifth, “can be say’d to be more solemn than that which such a royal presence honour’d, such a multitude of princeës and ladys adorn’d, where the tumultuous noise of so many trumpets force’d the æthereal parts to reecho with the thundering roar, and the hyperlyrical melody of the harpers, by a certain most velocious touch of the fingers, shaking long notes with short ones, softly tickle’d the ears of the guests by a most sweet and gentle whisper? The musical concert, also, of the other instruments, which learn’d to jar by the strife of no dissonance invite’d them to congruous joys.”\* War-ton, who has mention’d this ceremony, tells us he did it to introduce a circumstance very pertinent to his purpose, “which is that the number of harpers in the hall was innumerable, who, UNDOUBTEDLY, accompanied their instruments with heroic rhymes;”† although Elmham, his sole authority, neither says that “the number of harpers was innumerable,” nor that there was any singing at all; all sorts of instrumental performers striving to make as loud a noise as possible: but this is his manner of writing history.

On his return from France, after his glorious victorys, and his magnificent entry into London, he, according to the same historian, “utterly pro-

\* *Vita Henrici quinti*, p. 23.

† *History of English poetry*, II, 35.

hibited that songs should be made of his triumph, to be sung by harpers, or any others whatsoever." \* In despite, however, of this proclamation, some audacious minstrel actually compose'd a metrical romance on his conquests, which is still extant; † being the same with "The battayle of Egingecourt," likewise mention'd by mister Warton, and printed by John Skot, if not, also, by Wynken de Worde, both in quarto, and black-letter: another poet of a more humble description produceing a song on the same victory, also in print. It is not, at the same time, at all probable that the minstrels who had been require'd to accompany him in his invasion of France, were composeërs or singers of romance, or even performers on the harp: since, as Casius observes,

"What should the wars do with these jiging fools?" ‡  
 "Even so late as the time of Froisart," according to bishop Percy, "we find *minstrels* and *heralds* mention'd together, as those who might securely go into an enemy's country." † In "the noble history of kyng Ponthus," 1511, it is say'd "Than beganne *mynstrelles* for to *play* all maner of *myn-*

\* P. 72.

† See Hearnes Appendix to Elmham, Num. VI.

‡ Shakspeares tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV, scene 3.

‡ *Reliques*, I, 63. In the 16th year of Edward II. William de Morlee has a grant with the addition of "the kings minstrel, filed *Roy de North*; and, in the 12th of his successor, *Andreu Noreis*, his "*chier sergeaunt*." Andrew Noreis was "*roy d'armes de North*." Anstis, II, 300.

*strelsy*, and also the *herauldes* began to cry, &c." These *minstrels*, therefore, would seem to have been the musicians of the army, or military band: *trumpeters*, it is probable, who, in modern times, are intitle'd to the same privilege.

Edward the fourth, in 1469, granted a charter, by which he incorporate'd Walter Haliday marshal, and seven others of his minstrels to be a fraternity or perpetual gild (such as, he understood, the *brothers* and *sisters* of the fraternity of minstrels had in times past), to be govern'd by a marshal, and by two wardens, who were to admit *brothers* and *sisters* into the say'd gild, and are authoris'd to examine the pretensions of all such as affected to exercise the minstrel profession; and to regulate, govern, and punish them throughout the realm (those of Chester excepted).\* "This," doctor Percy thinks, "seems to have some resemblance to the earl-marshal's court among the heralds, and is another proof of the great affinity and resemblance which the minstrels bore to the college of arms."†

This fraternity is never mention'd by any English historian; and it is certainly difficult to conceive, for what purpose these minstrels, brothers and sisters, were thus incorporate'd, unless they were to attend the king's army, in the nature of heralds, whenever it went abroad. Alexander Carle, an officer, it would seem, of this fraternity, call'd "*farjaunt of the mynstrellis*," came, it is

\* *Fœdera*, XI, 642.

† *Reliques*, I, xlv.



say'd, to the king as he lay in bed in the north, in the same year, in great hast, and badde hym aryse, for he had enemyes cummyng for to take him." This gild appears to have continue'd down to within the reign of king Henry the eighth.\* It would seem from the above circumstance that it was the duty of a party of the minstrels to accompany the king in his progresses.

The Engleish minstrels, as they were generally call'd, though the names of *jestours*, or *gestours*, *fogeloures*, *jugloures*, or *juglers*, *glewemen*, or *gleemen*, *magiciens*, *tregetours*, † *disours*, *feggers*, ‡

\* *Reliques*, I, xlv.

† *Tregetours* are mention'd by Gower (fo. 38):

"With *fleyghtes* of a *tregetour*;"  
and both *tragetours* and *magicians* by Chaucer, in *The house of Fame*, iii, 169. Lydgate, in *The dance of Machabree*, supposees *Death* to address thus

"Maister John Rykell, sometime *tregitour*  
Of noble Henri king of Englelond,  
For all the *fleyghtes* and turnyng of thyne honde  
Thou must come near this dame to understonde:  
For Deth shortly, nother on see nor londe,  
Is not dysceyved by noon *illusions*."

This word is derive'd by Tyrwhitt from *treget*, deceit, imposture.

‡ These two words occur in Robert of Brunnes version of *The Manuel de peche*:

"I mad nought for no *disours*,  
Ne for *feggers*, no *harpours*."

Thus, too, Gower, speaking of the coronation-festival of a Roman emperour:

"When he was gladd at his mete,  
And every minstrell had *plaide*,  
And every *disour* had *saide*,  
Which most was pleasaunt to his ere." (B. 7, fo. IV.)



*fiddleërs, harpers, &c.* were by no means uncommon, appear to have undergone a mutation similar to that heretofore observe'd in the French, the names of the particular branches being confounded in that of the general profesion. Chaucer, as we have already seen, defines the *jogelour*, of his own time, to be a wonder-worker, or slight-of-hand-man, as the *jugler*, or *juglour*, is at present. Again, in *Piers Plowman*, fo. 32:

“ Save Jake the *jugloure*, and Jonet of the stewes.”

“ And *japers*, and *juglers*, and *janglers* \* of gestes.”

This authour, however, generally uses *minstrel* and *gleman* as synonymous.

Sir John Mandeville, describing the exhibitions he saw at the court of the *Grete chan*, says, “ And than comen *jogulours* and *enchantoures*, that don many marvaylles, &c.”

William of Nasfington, in his prologue, warns his readers,

——“ furst at the begynnyng,  
That i will make na vayn *carpynge*,  
Of *dedes of armys*, ne of *amours*,  
As dus *mynstrallis* and *jestours*,

\* *Janglers*, which frequently occurs in Chaucers *Canterbury tales*, is explain'd, by his learned editor, a *prateër* or *babbleër*, and has, therefor, no sort of connection or analogy with *jogelour*. It is, at the same time, from the French; as, in an old *fabliau* in the Harley MS. 2253:

“ *Vus estez tenuz un janglers.*”

Thus, too, in Chaucers *Troilus and Cresida*, V, 755, *jonglerie* is a corruption of *janglerie*:

“ No force of wickid tongis *jonglerie*.”

That makys *carpyng* in many a place,

Of *Octoviane* and of *Isambruse*,

And of many other *jeeftes*,

And namly, when thai come to *feeftes*." \*

But though he names both *minstrels* and *jestours*, he does not give them several functions; as *carpyng* seems synonymous with singing. Yet it must be admitted that Adam Davie, actually, or apparently, makes a distinction on this subject:

"The *minstrels* *finge*, the *jogelours* *carpe*."

In a narrative of "The departure of the princess Katherine out of Spaine, together with her arival and reception in England," 1501, printed in the new edition of Lelands *Collectanea* (V, 352), we read that "she and her ladyes call'd for their *minstrells*...and solace'd themselves with the disports of *dauncing*."

If "mynstrells" at that period were neither "trompetts" nor "fakewowtts," they were clearly instrumental musicians of no very dissimilar nature.† In the progress of the new queen of Scotland, elder daughter of Henry the seventh, to meet her husband, in the year 1502-3, "Apon the gatt [of Berwick]," as we are told by an eye-witness, "war the MYNSTRAYLLS of the capitayn, playnge of their INSTRUMENTS."‡ "After the soupper...MYNSTRELLS begonne to *blowe*, wher

\* Kings MSS. 17 C VIII.

† See Lelands *Collectanea*, IV, 272, 285.    ‡ *Ili.* 279.

daunced, the quene accompayned of my lady of Surrey."\* After...the MYNSTRELLS begonne to play a basse daunce;" and "after thys doon, thay playde a rownde."† These, it may be, were the regimental band.

It would seem that the minstrels of this æra had a dress to distinguish their profession. The company describe'd by the old authour, whose words are quote'd, being seated in a tavern, "in comes a noise of musicians, IN TAWNEY COATS, who taking off their caps, asked if they would have any MUSIC? The widow answered, No; they were merry enough. Tut! said the old man, let us hear, good fellows, what you can do; and PLAY ME *The beginning of the world.*"‡ With respect to these *tawney coats*; it is well-known to have been the livery of the bishop of Winchester, within whose manor of Southwark, and under whose patronage, licence, and authority, the PUBLICK STEWS at that period flourish'd. This circumstance is even allude'd to in *The first part of king Henry VI*, where the cardinal-bishop of Winchester enters "attended by a train of servants IN TAWNY

\* Lelands *Collectanea*, IV, 283.

† *Ibi.* 284. See also 296.

‡ *History of Jack of Newbury*, by Tho. Delony. A noise of musicians was a company of them. In *The second part of king Henry IV.* one of the drawers of *The boars head* bids his fellow see if he can find out "Sneaks noise;" mistress Tearsheet being desirous to have some music.

coats:" and is address'd by the duke of Gloucester:

"Thou, that give'st whores indulgenceës to sin."

"Draw, men, for all this privilegeëd place;  
Blue-coats to tawny-coats!"

"Winchester-goose,\* i cry, a rope! a rope!  
Out tawny-coats! Out scarlet hypocrite."

Henry Chettle describes *Anthony Now-Now*, a famous minstrel of his own time, (not Anthony Munday,) as "an od old fellow; low of stature, his head covered with a round cap, his body with a *tawney coate*, his legs and feete trust uppe in leather buskins, his gray haire and furrowed face witnessd his age, his *treble viol* in his hande, assured me of his *profesion*. On which (by his continuall sawing having left but one string) after his best manner, hee gave me a *hunts-up*."†

*The begining of the world* appears to have been a favourite tune. It is mention'd, with others, in Heywood and Broomes tragi-comedy of *The witches of Lancashire*, 1634.

A curious account of the minstrel romanceës and their vocal and instrumental performers, in the time of queen Elizabeth, is transmitted to us by master Puttenham, a courtier, it would seem, and, in his own conceit, a most elegant and polish'd writer.

\* A *Winchester-goose*, according to doctor Johnson, was "a *strumpet*, or the consequences of her love."

† *Kind-Harts dreame*, lig. B 2.

“ That rime or concord is not commendably used both in the end and middle of a verse...albeit these common rimers use it much...so on the other side doth the over-busie and too speedy returne of one maner of tune, too much annoy and as it were glut the care, unless it be in small and popular musickes song by these *cantabanqui* upon benches and barrells heads, where they have no other audience then boys or countrey-fellowes that passe by them in the streete, or else by blind harpers, or such like tavern minstrels that give a fit of mirth for a groat; and their matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the tale of sir Topas, the reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, Adam Bell, and Clymme of the Clough, and such other old romances, or historicall rimes, made purposely for recreation of the common people at Christmasse diners and brideales, and in tavernes and alehouses, and such other places of base resort.”\*

The rewards of the minstrels, for their musical and vocal performancees, appear to have been, at least on many occasions, considering the superiour value of money in those times, by no means contemptible. In the year 1306, William Fox and Cradock his asfociate, for singing in the presence of the prince and other great men being in his company at London, received 20*s*. The minstrel of the

\* Puttenham, *Arte of English poesie*, 68.

countess Marechal, doing his minstrelsy before the prince at Penrith, 4*s*.\* In an annual account-roll of the Augustine priory of Bicester, for the year 1431, among the "*Dona prioris*," is to a harper 8*d*; to another 12*d*; to a certain minstrel of the lord Talbot at Christmas 12*d*; to the minstrels of the lord Strange in the Epiphany, 20*d*; to two minstrels of the lord Lovel in the-morrow of St. Mark, 16*d*; to the minstrels of the duke of Gloucester in the feast of the Nativity, 3*s*. 4*d*; and to a certain bearward, 4*d*.† The prior of Maxtoke in Warwickshire, in various years of king Henry the sixth, gave to a jugler in the week of St. Michael, 4*d*; to a harper and other juglers at Christmas 4*d*; to the mimes of Solihul, 6*d*; to those of Coventry, 20*d*; and at another time, 12*d*; to the mime of lord Ferrers, 6*d*; to the mimes of the lord Astely, 12*d*; to those of the lord of Warwick, 10*d*; to a blind mime, 2*d*, &c.‡ In the time of queen Elizabeth, as we are told by Puttenham, the usual fee of a chanting harper was "a groat," which doctor Percy seems to think no bad thing.§

\* Warton, I, 116; from the Wardrobe-roll.

† *Idem*, I, 89.

‡ Warton, I, 90. See more in a note in the following page.

§ That this was the common price, long after Puttenham's time, appears from Jonson's *Masque of the metamorphose'd Gipsies*, 1621, where, on the introduction of Cheeks the pipeer, or Tom Ticklefoot the tabourer, one of the company, says:—"I cannot hold now, there's my *groat*, let's have a *fit* for mirth-fake." These *groats* gave rise to the expression of *fiddlers money*, though, as that coin is no longer current, it is now apply'd to *testers*.



“Many of our old metrical romances,” as doctor Percy says, “whether originally English, or translated from the French, to be sung to an English audience, are addressed to persons of *high rank*, as appears from their beginning thus—“Listen *Lordings*,” and the like (P. lxxxiii). He elsewhere observes that “*our nobility* are often addressed therein by the title of *Lordings*” (P. ciii). *Lordings*, however, by no means implies nobility, and is merely equivalent to *sirs* or *masters*. Thus Chaucer’s *pardonere* addresses his fellow-pilgrims, who certainly were not persons of high rank :

“*Lordings*, quod he, in chirche when i prade.”  
John Derricke, also, in his *Image of Irelande*, 1581, repeatedly addresses his readers by the same title.

The like address to the auditory frequently recurs in the *Chester-Whitfun-plays*, which appear to have been perform’d before an immense number of people.

It has been maintain’d elsewhere that the minstrels, whether singers or instrumental performers, were held in very little, if any kind of, estimation. That the word *minstrel*, whatever it might have originally, or anciently signify’d, meant no more, in comparatively modern times, than a *fidler*, a *crowder*, a *musician*, is evident from all the glossaries and dictionaries which mention them : as, for instance, those of Florio, Spelman, Cotgrave, and Blount. Their true character, however, or peculiar accomplishments, will sufficiently appear from the author of *Piers Plowman*, who compos’d that work

in 1362, and seems to have been very well acquainted with them, and thus introducees one of this respectable fraternity, speaking for himself:

“ I am MYNSTRELL, quod that man, my name  
is *Activa Vita*,

All idle iche hate, for All-Active is my name.

A wafrer well ye wyt, and serve manye lordes,

And fewe roobes i song, or furred gownes :

Can i lye to do men laughe, than lachen i should

Other mantell or money, amonges lord or minstrels,

And for i can neither *taber*, ne *trumpe*, ne *tell no*

*Farten*,\* ne *fyslen*, at feastes, ne *harpen*, [*gests*,

*Jape*, ne *juggle*, ne gentilly *pype*,

Ne nether *saylen*, ne *saute*, ne *syng to the gyterne*,

I have no good gystes of these great lordes.”†

This poor fellow, however, could do none of all these things. He was, in fact, a sort of *cake-bakvër*, and dealt in *wafers*; but the allegory cannot be easily separated from the costume.

He, elsewhere, (fo. 43, b), speaks of

——“ gods *gleman*, and a game of heaven,

Would never the faithful father his *fidle* were  
untemperd,

Ne his *gleman* a *gedlyng*, a *goer to a tavern*.”

Again, fo. 1, b :

——“ some chosen chaffer, they cheveden the  
better,—

And myrthes to make as *mynstrelles* kunneth,

\* See before, P. clxxxi, at the end of a passage from John of Salisbury.

† Fo. 68.

And getten golde wyth her *glee*, synles i leve,  
As japers and janglers, Judas chyl dren."

Again, fo. 47, b :

" And glader then the *gleman* that golde heith  
to gyfte ;

Again, fo. 45, b :

" Harlots for her harlotry may have of her  
goods,  
And japers, and *juglours*, and *janglers of gestes*."

Again, fo. 32 :

" Save Jake the *jugloure*, and Jonet of the  
*stewes*."

Again, fo. 26 :

" And than he go, *lyke a glewemans bytch*,  
Sometyme asyde, and fometime arere."

It may be infer'd from this pasage, that the min-  
strel-harpers were frequently blind ; and, in fact,  
the phrase of " blind harper" has become pro-  
verbial. So, in Cottons *Virgile travestie*, B. 1 :

" Whilst a *blind harper* did advance,  
That wore queen Didos cognizance,  
A *minstrel*, that Iopas hight,  
Who play'd and sung to them all night."

Again, fo. 13, b :

" As comen as a cart-waye to eche a knave  
th. t walketh,  
To monkes, and to *minstrels*, to *mesels* in *hedges*."

It must be own'd we frequently meet them in very  
good company.

The minstrels were also *bagpipers*. Thus, in the *Coventry Corpus-Christi play*:

“Ze *mynstrell* of myrth, blowe up a good blast,  
Whyll i go to chawmer, and chaunge myn array.”

Again, in sir David Lindseys *Satyre of the thrie estaits*, 1602 (but written in 1539):

“*Minstrell*, blaw up ane brawl of France,  
Let see wha hobbils best.”

Again, in John Heywoods *Play of the wether*:

“For the most part all inaner *mynstrelsy*,  
By wynde they delyver theyr founde chesely,  
Fyll me a *bagpype* of your water full,  
As swetly shull it founde, as it were stuffyd with  
woll.”

Again, in *The popishe kingdome*, from the Latin of Thomas Meorgeorgus, by Barnabe Googe, 1570, fo. 56:

“The table taken up they rise, and all the youth  
apace,  
The *minstrell* with them called, go to some con-  
venient place,  
Where, when with *bagpipe* hoarce, he hath begon  
his musicke fine,  
And unto such as are preparte to *daunce* hath  
given signe,  
Comes thither streight, &c.”

Sometimes their instruments were a drum and fife: for so Robert Greene, in his *Orlando furioso*, 1594:

“I’ll be his *minstrell* with my *drum* and *fife*,  
Bid him come forth, and *dance* it, if he dare.”

Many other instanceës, of the same kind, might be aded, but these may suffice.

Stubs, in his *Anatomie of abuses*, 1583 and 1595, describes the minstrels of his time as a parcel of drunken ickets, and bawdy parasites," that, says he, "raunge the countries, riming and finging of unclean, corrupt, and filthy songs in tavernes, ale-houses, innes, and other publike assemblies...There is no ship," he exclaims, "so laden with merchandize, as their heads are pestred with al kind of bawdy songs, filthy ballades, and scurvy rymes, serving for every purpose, and for every company. For proof whereof," ads he, "who bee bawdier knaves then they? who uncleaner then they? who more licentious, and looser minded then they? who more incontinent than they? and, brieflie, who more inclined to all kind of insolency and leudness then they?...I think that al good minstrels, sober and chaste musitions, may dance the wilde Moris through a needles eye."

This same puritanical snarler allows that "notwithstanding it were better (in respect of worldly acceptation) to bee a piper, or a bawdie minstrell, then a devine, for the one is loved," he says, "for his ribauldrie, the other hated for his gravitie, wisedome, and sobrietie. Every toun, citty, and countrey," he ads, "is full of these minstrelles to pipe up a daunce to the devill; but of devines, so fewe there bee as any maie hardely bee seen:" it would have been much the better, indeed, if there

had been none at all : for, certainly, a pipeër is preferable to a parson.

It is, at the same time, no small compliment to the minstrels of former ægës, that, as they were, doubtless, much more active and useful ; they were infinitely better pay'd, than the idle and good-for-nothing clergy. " The fraternity of the Holy crosse in Abingdon, in Henry the sixths time...did every yeare keepe a feast, and then they used to have twelve preistes to sing a *Dirige*, for which they had given them foure pence a peece. They had also twelve minstrells, some from Coventré, and some from Maydenhith, who had two shillings three pence a piece, besides theyre dyet and horsemen...Observe that, in those days, they payd theyre minstrells better then theyre preistes."\* The employment of these minstrels may be collected from a subsequent pasage, in which the writeër says that they had " pageantes, and playes, and May-games to captivat the senses of the zelous beholders, and to allure the people to the greater liberality." Another instance of the same kind of disparity is relateëd by Warton, where four shillings were given to the six *mimi*, or minstrels, and only two shillings to the eight priests. In the same year (1441), the prior gives no more than sixpence to a preaching frier.†

" From the following entry," says mister Stevens, " on the books of the stationers' company, in

\* *Liber niger*, P. 598.

† II, 106.



the year 1560, it appears that the hire of a *parson* was cheaper than that of a *minstrel*, or a *cook*:

“ Item, payd to the preacher - vis. ii d.

Item, payd to the minstrell - xii s.

Item, payd to the coke - - xvs.”

(*Shakspeare*, 1793, XIV, 529.) It should be remember'd, at the same time, that the parsons busyness would be finish'd in an hour, whereas the cook and the minstrel would be employ'd the whole of the day, and, peradventure, all night too.

The onely genuine minstrel-ballads which are known to exist at present (except such as may have been publish'd with great inaccuracy and licentiousness by the right reverend the lord bishop of Dro-more, or remain conceal'd in his lordships folio manuscript) are *The ancient battle of Chery-chace*, *The battle of Otterbourne*, *John Dory*, *Little Musgrave and lady Barnard*, *Lord Thomas and fair Eleanor*, and *Fair Margaret and sweet William*, to which one may, possibly, venture to ad *John Armstrong* and *Captain Care*; all which are somewhere or other in print.

A singular and whimsical writeër, name'd Robert Laneham, or Langham, a *Nofinghamshire* gentleman, who appears to have accompany'd Elizabeth in some of her progresses, as “ clark of the council chamber door,” in “ A letter: whearin, part of the entertainment untoo the queenz majesty, at Killingwoorth castl in Warwick Sheer, in this soomerz progreß 1575, iz signified: from a freend officer

attendant in the court, unto his freend [master Humfrey Martin, mercer] a citizen and merchant of London," and there printed in the above year, in a small volume in black-letter, gives the following curious narrative of "a ridiculous devise of an auncient minstrell and his song," which, "was prepared to have been proffered, IF MEETE TIME AND PLACE HAD BEEN FOOUND FOR IT:" so that this intended exhibition (in flat contradiction to doctor Percys misrepresented account) did not actually take place: but, as good luck would have it, "Ons, in a woorthipful company, whear, full appointed, he recoounted his matter in sort az it should have been uttered," master Langham, in person, "chaunfed to bee; and what i noted," says he, "heer thus i tell yoo. A parson very meet seemed he for the purpoze; of a XLV years oldd, apparelled partly as he would himself: Hiz cap of hiz hed seemly rounded tonster-wyze; sayr kembd, that with a spoonge deintly dipt in a littl caponz greas, was finelye smoothed too make it shine like a mallards wing; hiz beard smugly shaven; and yet his shyrt after the nu trink, with ruffs sayr starched, sleeked, and glistering like a payr of nu shooz: marshalld in good order: with a stetting stick, and floout that every ruff stood up like a waser. A side gooun of Kendal green, after the freshnes of the year now; gathered at the neck with a narro gorget fastened afore with a white clasp and a keepar close up to the chin, but easily

for heat too undoo when he list : seemly begyrt in a red caddiz gyrdl ; from that, a payr of capped Sheffield knivez hanging a to side : out of hiz bozom draune foorth a lappet of his napkin, edged with a blu lace, and marked with a truloove, a hart, and *A. D.* for *Damian* : for he was but a bachelor yet.

“ His gooun had fyde sleevez dooun to mid-legge, slit from the shooulder too the hand, and lined with white cotten. His dooblet sleevez of blak woorsted : upon them a payr of poynets of tawny chamblet, laced along the wreast wyth blu threedden points ; a wealt toward the hand of fustian anapes : a payr of red neather stocks : a payr of pumps on hiz feet, with a cross cut at the toze for cornz ; not nu indeede, yet cleanly blakt with foot, and shining az a shoing horn. About his neck, a red rebond futabl to his girdl : his harp in good grace dependaunt before him ; his wreast tyed to a green lace and hanging by : Under the gorget of his goound a fayr flagon cheyn of pewter (for fylver ;) as a *squire minstrel* of *Middilsex*, that travaild the cuntree thys foomer feason unto fayrz, and woorshipfull menz houzez. From his cheyn hoong a schoochion, with metall and cooler resplendant upon hiz breast, of the auncient armes of Islington....(Then follows an absurd and affected description of these arms, evidently the sole manufacture of master Laneham, or some other coxcomb of the same turn...This being ridicule'd by “ a good fello of the company”).... —“ every man laught a good, fave the minstrell:

that though THE FOOLL wear made privy, all was but for sport, yet too see himself thus crost with a contrary kue that hee lookt not for, woold straight have ge'en over all, waxt very wayward, eager and foour: hoowbeit at laste, by sum entreaty, and many fair woordz, with sak and suger, we sweetned him againe: and after he becam az mery az a py. Appeerez then afresh, in hiz ful formalitee with a lovely loock. After three lowlie cooursiez, cleered his vois with a hem and reach, and spat oout withal; wiped hiz lips with the hollo of his hand for syling his napkin, temperd a string or too with his wreast, and after a little warbling on hiz harp for a prelude, came soorth with a sollem song, war-raunted for story oout of *King Arthurs* acts; the first booke, and 26 chapter; whearof i gate a copy: and that iz this: viz.

“ So it befell upon a Pentecost day, &c.”

At this the minstrell made a pauz and a curtezy, for *primus pastus* [*pasfus*]. More of the song iz thear, but i gat it not. Az for the matter, had it cum to the sheaw, i think the fello would have handled it well ynoough.”

The poor fellow thus brought foreward to represent, and even to ridicule, the respectable character of an ancient minstrel, may be readily admitted to have been himself a humble retainer to that once illustrious profesion; this appears by his being able to accompany his song with the melody of the harp. He was, therefor, it is likely, one of those “*canta-*

*banqui* upon benches and barrels heads, where they had no other audience then boys or countrey-fellows;" as allready describe'd by Puttenham; or else one of his "taverne-minstrels that [use'd to] give a fit of mirth for a groat." Our critick, however, finds no fault with his performance, and, even, pays him a sort of parting compliment. It is sufficiently manifest, at the same time, from this identical narrative, that there was, at the above period, no minstrel performer, distinguish'd by his dress, or manners, as the real or accurate representative of a minstrel of the three precedeing centurys, who would, in the puritanical times of that bigoted and bloody tygress, have been treated with merited respect.

By an act of the 39th of queen Elizabeth (1597), Chap. IV. intituled "An act for punishment of rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," "All fencers, bearwards, common players of enterludes, and MINSTRELS, wandering abroad; all juglers, tinkers, pedlers, &c. shall be adjudged and deemed rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars:" subject, however, to a proviso or exception in favour of John Dutton of Dutton in the county of Chester esquire "for any liberty, preheminance, authority, jurisdiction," which he then lawfully used, "by reason of any ancient charters, or of any prescription, usage, or title whatsoever." \*

\* This clause continue'd to be inserted in all vagrant acts down to the present reign, in which it has been omitted.

This statute is concludeed to have nearly put an end to the profesſion of minſtrel, baſe and begerly as it had become: an ordinance dureing the uſurpation, in 1656, being the laſt publick notice that is takeen of it: whereby it is enacted that if any of the “ perſons commonly called FIDLERS or MINSTRELS ſhall be taken playing, fidling, and making muſic in any inn, ale-houſe, or tavern, or proffering themſelves, or deſiring, or intreating, any to hear them play or make muſic,” they are to be “ adjudged and declared to be rogues, vagabonds, and ſturdy beggars.”

“ Then, for the truths ſake, come along, come  
 Leave this place of ſuperſtition: [along,  
 Were it not for we, that the brethren be,  
 You would ſink into perdition.” \*

Shakſpeare calls theſe perſons “ feaſt-finding minſtrels,” in his *Rape of Lucrece*: and Ben Jonſon, in his *Tale of a tub*, introducees “ Old father Roſin, chief *minſtrel* of Highgate, and his two boys.” They are *fiddlers*; and play the tunes call’d for by the company: as *Tom Tiler*, *The jolly joiner*, and *The jovial tinker*. The ſame dramatist, in his *Maſque of the metamorphos’d Gypsies*, calls a *bagpiper*, or *taborer*, “ the miracle of *minſtrels* ;” and, in another part, makes one of the characters ſay, “ The king has his noiſe of gypsies, as well as of *bearwards*, and OTHER MINSTRELS.” So that, of whatever conſequence they might have been, in ancient periods,

\* *Loyal ſongs*, 1, 5.



they ended their career in vagabonds and fiddleërs. Doctour Bull, who wrote fatirical verseës against them, (which, though extant in one of the Harleian manuscripts, cannot be recover'd,) pays them the following parting compliment :

“ When Jesus went to Jairus house,  
[Whose daughter was about to dye,]

He turn'd the minstrels out of doors,

Among the rascal company :

BEGGERS THEY ARE, WITH ONE CONSENT,  
AND ROGUES, BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.”

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NOTE omitted (III, 259, L. 18).

Mister Tyrwhitt observes (IV, 318), “ This Saracene deity, in an old romance, MS. Bod. 1624, is constantly called *Tervagan* :” and cites the original lines, without ever noticing that he had once met with the same orthography in any one copy of Chaucer, printed or manuscript.

## METRICAL ROMANCEËS.

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### YWAINE AND GAWIN.

ALMYGHTI god that made mankyn,  
He schilde his fervandes out of syn,  
And mayntene tham, with might and mayne,  
That herkens Ywayne and Gawayne:  
Thai war knightes of the tabyl rownde,  
Tharfore listens a lytel stownde.  
Arthur, the kyng of Yngland,  
That wan al Wales with his hand,  
And al Scotland, als sayes the buke,  
And mani mo, if men will luke, 10  
Of al knightes he bare the pryse,  
In werld was non so war ne wise;  
Trew he was in alkyn thing,  
Als it byfel to swilk a kyng.

He made a feste, the soth to say,  
Opon the Witsononday,  
At Kerdyf, that es in Wales,  
And, efter mete, thar in the hales,  
Ful grete and gay was the assemblè,  
Of lordes and ladies of that cuntrè, 20  
And als of knyghtes war and wyfe,  
And damifels of mykel pryse ;  
Ilkane with other made grete gamin,  
And grete solace, als thai war samin ;  
Fast thai carped and curtaysly,  
Of dedes of armes and of veneri,  
And of gude knyghtes that lyfed then,  
And how men might tham kyndeli ken,  
By doghtines of thaire gude dede,  
On ilka fyde wharesum thai yede : 30  
For thai war stuf in ilka stowre,  
And tharfore gat thai grete honowre.  
Thai tald of more trewth tham bitwene,  
Than now omang men here es sene ;  
For trowth and luf es al bylast,  
Men uses now another craft ;  
With worde men makes it trew and stabil,  
Bot in thair faith es noght bot fabil ;

With the mowth men makes it hale,  
Bot trew trowth es nane in the tale. 40  
Tharfore her-of now wil i blyn,  
Of the kyng Arthur i wil bygin,  
And of his curtayse cumpany,  
That was the flour of chevallry;  
Swilk lose thai wan with spereshorde,  
Over al the world went the worde.

After mete went the kyng  
Into chamber to slepeing,  
And also went with him the quene,  
That byheld thai al-bydene, 50  
For thai saw tham never fo  
On high dayes to chamber go;  
Bot sone when thai war went to *slepe*,  
Knyghtes fat the dor to kepe,  
Sir Dedyne, and sir Segramore,  
Sir Gawayn, and sir Kay, fat thore,  
And also fat thar sir Ywaine,  
And Colgrevance of mekyl mayn.  
This knight that hight Colgrevance  
Tald his felows of a chance, 60  
And of a stowr he had in bene,  
And al his tale herd the quene;

The chamber-dore sho has unshet,  
And down omang tham scho hir fet;  
Sodainli sho fat down right,  
Or ani of tham of hir had fight;  
Bot Colgrevance rafe up in hy,  
And thar-of had fyr Kay envy,  
For he was of his tong a skalde,  
And forto bofte was he ful balde. 70  
Ow, Colgrevance, faid fir Kay,  
Ful light of lepes has thou bene ay,  
Thou wenes now that the fal fall,  
For to be heudeft of us all;  
And the quene fal understand,  
That her es none so unkunand;  
Al if thou rafe, and we fat styll,  
We ne dyd it for none yll,  
Ne for no maner of fayntise,  
Ne for us denyd noght forto rise, 80  
That we ne had refen had we hyr fene.  
Sir Kay, i wote wele, fayd the quene,  
And it war gude thou left swilk sawes,  
And noght despise fo thi felawes.

Madame, he faid, by goddes dome,  
We ne wist no thing of thi come;

And if we did noght curtaysly,  
Takes to no velany ;  
Bot pray ye now this gentil man,  
To tel the tale that he bygan. 90  
Colgreuance said to sir Kay,  
Bi grete god, that aw this day,  
Na mar moves me thi flyt  
Than it war a flies byt ;  
Ful oft wele better men than i  
Has thou despyfied despytufely ;  
It es ful semeli, als me think,  
A brok omang men forto styng ;  
So it fars by the, syr Kay,  
Of weked wordes has thou bene ay, 100  
And sen thi wordes er wikked and fell,  
This time tharto na mor i tell,  
Bot of the thing that i bygan.  
And sone sir Kay him answerd than,  
And said ful tite unto the quene,  
Madame, if ye had noght her bene,  
We fold have herd a felly case,  
Now let ye us of our solace ;  
Tharfor, madame, we wald yow pray,  
That ye cumand him to say, 110



And tel forth als he had tyght.  
 Than answerd that hende knight,  
 Mi lady es so avysè,  
 That scho wil noght cumand me,  
 To tel that towches me to ill,  
 Scho es noght of so weked will.  
 Sir Kai faid than, ful smiertli,  
 Madame, al hale this cumpani  
 Praies yow hertly, now omell,  
 That he his tale forth might tell; 120  
 If ye wil noght for our praying,  
 For faith ye aw unto the kyng,  
 Cumandes him his tale to tell,  
 That we mai her how it byfell.

Than faid the quene, Sir Colgrevance,  
 I prai the tak to no grevance,  
 This kene karping of fyr Kay,  
 Of weked wordes has he bene ay,  
 So that none may him chastise,  
 Tharfor i prai thee, on al wife, 130  
 That thou let noght for his sawes,  
 At tel to me and thi felawes,  
 Al thi tale how it bytid,  
 For my luf i the pray and byd.

Sertes, madame, that es me lath,  
Bot for I wil noght mak yow wrath,  
Yowr cumandment i fal fulfill,  
If ye will listen me untill;  
With hertes and eres understandes,  
And i fal tel yow swilk tithandes, 140  
That ye herd never none slike  
Reherced in no kynges ryke;  
Bot word fares als dose the wind,  
Bot if men it in hert bynd;  
And wordes woso trewly tase  
By the eres into the hert it gase;  
And in the hert thar es the horde,  
And knawing of ilk mans worde.

Herkens, hende, unto my spell,  
Trofels fal i yow nane tell, 150  
Ne lesinges forto ger yow lagh,  
Bot i fal fay right als i fagh.  
Now, als this time fex yer,  
I rade allane, als ye fal her,  
Obout, forto seke aventurs,  
Wele armid in gude armurs,  
In a frith i fand a strete,  
Ful thik and hard, i yow bihete,

With thornes, breres, and moni a quyn,  
Ner hand al day i rade thare-yn, 160  
And thurgh i paf, with mekyl payn,  
Than come i fone into a playn,  
Whar i gan fe a breufe brade,  
And thederward ful faft i rade;  
I faw the walles and the dyke,  
And hertly wele it gan me lyke;  
And on the draw-brig faw i ftand,  
A knight with fawkon on his hand;  
This ilk knight, that be ye balde,  
Was lord and keper of that halde. 170  
I hailfed him kindly, als i kowth,  
He anfwerd me mildeli with mowth;  
Mi fterap toke that hende knight,  
And kindly cumanded me to lyght,  
His cumandment i did onane,  
And into hall fone war we tane.  
He thanked god, that gude man,  
Sevyn fithes or ever he blan,  
And the way that me theder broght,  
And als the aventurs that i foght. 180  
Thus went we in, god do him mede!  
And in his hand he led my ftede.

When we war in that fayre palays,  
It was ful worthly wrought always,  
I saw no man of moder born,  
Bot a burde hang us biforn,  
Was nowther of yren, ne of tre,  
Ne i ne wist whar-of it might be ;  
And by that bord hang a mall,  
The knyght smate on thar-with-all 190  
Thrise, and by then might men se,  
Bifore ham come a fair menyè,  
Curtayse men in worde and dede,  
To stabil sone thai led mi stede,  
A damisfel come unto me,  
The femeliest that ever i se,  
Luffumer lifed never in land,  
Hendly scho toke me by the hand,  
And sone that gentyl creature  
Al unlaced myne armure ; 200  
Into a chamber sho me led,  
And with a mantil scho me cled ;  
It was of purpur, fair and fine,  
And the pane of riche ermyne ;  
Al the folk war went us fra,  
And thare was none than bot we twa ;

Scho served me hendely to hend,  
Hir maners might no man amend;  
Of tong sho was trew and renable,  
And of hir semblant soft and stabile; 210  
Ful fain i wald, if that i might,  
Have woned with that swete wight:  
And when we fold go to sopere,  
That lady, with a luffom chere,  
Led me down into the hall,  
Thar war we served wele at all.  
It nedes noght to tel the mese,  
For wonder wele war we at esse.  
Byfor me sat the lady bright,  
Curtaisly my mete to dyght; 220  
Us wanted nowther baken ne roste,  
And, efter soper, sayd myne ofte,  
That he cowth noght tel the day  
That ani knight are with him lay,  
Or that ani adventures soght,  
Tharfor he prayed me, if i moght,  
On al wife when i come ogayne,  
That i fold cum to him fertayne.  
I said, Sir, gladly, yf i may,  
I had bene shame have said him nay. 230

That night had i ful gude rest,  
And mi stede esed of the best.  
Alfone als it was dayes lyght,  
Forth to far sone was i dyght;  
Mi leve of mine oft toke i thare,  
And went my way with-owten mare,  
Aventures for to layt in land.

A fair forest sone i fand,  
Me thocht mi hap thare fel ful hard,  
For thar was mani a wilde lebard, 240  
Lions, beres, bath bul and bare,  
That rewfully gan rope and rare;  
Oway i drogh me, and with that,  
I saw sone whar a man sat,  
On a lawnd, the fowlest wight  
That ever yit man saw in fyght;  
He was a lathly creatur,  
For fowl he was out of mesur;  
A wonder mace in hand he hade,  
And sone mi way to him i made; 250  
His hevyd, me-thought, was als grete  
Als of a rowncy or a nete.  
Unto his belt hang his hare,  
And efter that byheld i mare;



To his forhede byheld i than,  
Was bradder than twa large span;  
He had eres als ane olyfant,  
And was wele more than geant;  
His face was ful brade and flat;  
His nefe was cutted als a cat; 260  
His browes war like litel buskes;  
And his tethe like bare tuskes;  
A ful grete bulge opon his bak;  
Thar was nought made with-owten lac;  
His chin was fast until his brest;  
On his mace he gan him rest.  
Also it was a wonder wede  
That the cherle yn yede;  
Nowther of wol, ne of line,  
Was the wede that he went yn. 270  
When he me fagh, he stode up-right,  
I frayned him if he wolde fight,  
For tharto was i in gude will,  
Bot als a beste than stode he still;  
I hopid that he no wittes kowth,  
No reson forto speke with mowth.  
To him i spak ful hardily,  
And said, What ertow, belamy?

He said again, I am a man.

I said, Swilk saw i never nane ; 280

What ertow ? al sone said he.

I said, Swilk als thou her may se.

I said, What dose thou here allane ?

He said, I kepe thir bestes ilkane.

I said, That es mervaile think me,

For i herd never of man bot the,

In wildernes, ne in forestes,

That kepeing had of wilde bestes,

Bot thai war bunden fast in halde.

He sayd, Of thir es none so balde, 290

Nowther by day ne bi night,

Anes to pas out of mi sight.

I sayd, How so ? tel me thi scill.

Perfay, he said, gladly i will.

He said, In al this fair foreste

Es thar none so wilde beste,

That renin dar bot stil stand,

When i am to him cumand ;

And ay, when that i wil him fang,

With mi fingers, that er strang, 300

I ger him cri, on swilk manere,

That al the bestes when thai him here,

About me than cum thai all,  
And to mi fete fast thai fall,  
On thair maner merci to cry;  
Bot understand now, redyli,  
Olyve es thar lifand no ma,  
Bot i, that durst omang tham ga,  
That he ne fold fone be al to-rent,  
Bot thai er at my comandment; 310  
To me thai cum, when i tham call,  
And i am maister of tham all.  
Than he asked, onone right,  
What man i was. I said, A knyght,  
That foght aventurs in that land,  
My body to afai and fande:  
And i the pray of thi kownsfayle,  
Thou teche me to sum mervayle.  
He sayd, I can no wonders tell,  
Bot her-bifyde es a well, 320  
Wend theder, and do als i fay,  
Thou pases noght al quite oway.  
Folow forth this ilk strete,  
And fone sum mervayles fal thou mete,  
The well es under the fairest tre,  
That ever was in this cuntrè;

By that well hinges a bacyne,  
That es of gold gude and fyne,  
With a cheyne, trewly to tell,  
That wil reche into the well. 330

Thare es a chapel ner thar-by,  
That nobil es, and ful lufely,  
By the well standes a stane,  
Tak the bacyn sone onane,  
And cast on water with thi hand,  
And sone thou sal se new tithand.

A storme sal rise, and a tempest,  
Al about by est and west ;  
Thou sal here mani thonor blast,  
Al about the blawand fast ; 340

And there sal cum sliik flete and rayne,  
That unnese sal thou stand ogayne ;  
Of lightnes sal thou se a lowe,  
Unnethes thou sal thi-selven knowe ;  
And if thou pas with-owten grevance,  
Than has thou the fairest chance

That ever yit had any knyght  
That theder come to kyth his myght.

Than toke i leve, and went my way,  
And rade unto the midday ; 350

By than i come whare i fold be,  
I saw the chapel and the tre ;  
Thare i fand the fayrest thorne,  
That ever groued sen god was born ;  
So thik it was with leves grene,  
Might no rayn cum thar-bytwene,  
And that grenes lastes ay,  
For no winter dere yt may.  
I fand the bacyn, als he talde,  
And the wel with water kalde, 360  
An amerawd was the ftane,  
Richer faw i never nane,  
On fowr rubyes on heght standand,  
Thair light lasted over al the land ;  
And when i faw that femely fyght,  
It made me bath joyful and lyght ;  
I toke the bacyn sone onane,  
And helt water opon the ftane :  
The weder wex than wonder blak,  
And the thoner fast gan crak, 370  
Thar come slike stormes of hayl and rayn,  
Unnethes i might stand thare-ogayn ;  
The store windes blew ful lowd,  
So kene come never are of clowd ;

I was drevyn with snaw and flete,  
Unnethes i might stand on my fete ;  
In my face the levening smate,  
I wend have brent, so was it hate.  
That weder made me so will of rede,  
I hopid fone to have my dede ; 380  
And, fertes, if it lang had last,  
I hope i had never thethin past ;  
Bot, thorgh his might that tholed wownd,  
The storme fefed within a stownde ;  
Than wex the weder fayr ogayne,  
And tharof was i wonder fayne ;  
For best comforth of al thing  
Es solace efter myslikeing.

Than saw i fone a mery fyght,  
Of al the fowles that er in flyght 390  
Lighted so thik opon that tre,  
That bogh ne lese none might i se ;  
So merily than gon thai sing.  
That al the wode began to ring ;  
Ful mery was the melody,  
Of thaire sang and of thaire cry ;  
Thar herd never man none swilk,  
Bot if ani had herd that ilk ;

And when that mery dyn was done  
Another noyse than herd i sone, 400  
Als it war of horsmen,  
Mo than owther nyen or ten.

Sone than faw i cum a knyght,  
In riche armurs was he dight,  
And sone when i gan on him loke,  
Mi shelde and spër to me i toke ;  
That knight to me hied ful fast,  
And kene wordes out gan he cast ;  
He bad that i fold tel him tite  
Whi i did him swilk despite, 410  
With weders wakend him of rest,  
And done him wrang in his forest ;  
Tharfore, he said, thou fal aby,  
And with that come he egerly,  
And said, i had, ogayne refowne,  
Done him grete destrucciowne,  
And might it nevermore amend,  
Tharfor he bad i fold me fend ;  
And sone i smate him on the shelde,  
Mi schaft brac out in the felde, 420  
And then he bar me sone bi strenkith  
Out of my fadel my speres lenkith.



I wate that he was largely  
By the shuldres mare than i,  
And, bi the ded that i sal thole,  
Mi stede by his was but a sole;  
For mate i lay down on the grownde,  
So was i stonayd in that stownde.

A worde to me wald he noght say,  
Bot toke my stede, and went his way. 430

Ful farily than thare i sat  
For wa i wist noght what was what.

With my stede he went in hy,  
The same way that he come by,  
And i durst folow him no ferr,  
For dout me solde bite werr,  
And also yit, by goddes dome,  
I ne witt whar he by come.

Than i thoght how i had hight  
Unto myne oste, the hende knyght, 440  
And also til his lady bryght,  
To com ogayn, if that i myght;  
Mine armurs left i thare ilkane,  
For els myght i noght have gane;  
Unto myne in i come by day;  
The hende knight, and the fayre may,

Of my come war thai ful glade,  
And nobil semblant thai me made,  
In al thinges thai have tham born,  
Als thai did the night biforn. 450  
Sone thai wist whare i had bene,  
And said, that thai had never fene  
Knyght, that ever theder come,  
Take the way ogayn home.  
On this wise that tyme i wrought,  
I fand the folies that i foght.

Now, sekerly, said sir Ywayne,  
Thou ert my cosyn jermayne,  
Trew luf fuld be us bytwene,  
Als fold bytwyx brether bene, 460  
Thou ert a sole, at thou ne had are  
Tald me of this ferly fare,  
For, fertes, i fold onone ryght  
Have venged the of that ilk knyght ;  
So sal i yit, if that i may.  
And than als smertly sayd fyr Kay :  
He karpet to tham wordes grete :  
It es fene now es efter mete,  
Mare boste es in a pot of wyne,  
Than in a karcas of faynt Martyne ; 470

Arme the finertly, syr Ywayne,  
And sone that thou war cumen ogayne,  
Luke thou fil wele thi panele,  
And in thi sadel fet the wele ;  
And when thou wendes, i the pray,  
Thi baner wele that thou desplay ;  
And rede i, or thou wende,  
Thou tak thi leve at ilka frende ;  
And if it so bytide this nyght,  
That the in slepe dreche ani wight, 480  
Or any dremis mak the rad,  
Turn ogayn, and say i bad.

The quene answerd, with milde mode,  
And said, Sir Kay, ertow wode ?  
What the devyl es the withyn,  
At thi tong may never blyn  
Thi felows so fowly to shende ?  
Sertes, fir Kay, thou ert unhende.  
By him that for us sufferd pine,  
Syr, and thi tong war myne, 490  
I fold bical it tyte of trefon,  
And so might thou do by gude refon ;  
Thi tong dose the grete dishonowre,  
And tharefore is it thi traytowre.

And than alfone fyr Ywayne  
 Ful hendly answerd ogayne;  
 Al if men sayd hym velany,  
 He karped ay ful curtaysly:  
 Madame, he said unto the quene,  
 Thare fold na stryf be us bytwene, 500  
 Unkowth men wele may he shende,  
 That to his felows es so unhende;  
 And als, madame, men says fertayne,  
 That woso flites, or turnes ogayne,  
 He bygins al the mellè,  
 So wil i noght it far by me;  
 Lates him say halely his thoght,  
 His wordes greves me right noght.

Als thai war in this spekeing,  
 Out of the chamber come the kyng, 510  
 The barons that war thare fertayn,  
 Smertly rase thai him ogayne.  
 He bad tham sit down albydene,  
 And down he fet him by the quene;  
 The quene talde him, fayr and wele,  
 Als sho kowth, everilka dele,  
 Ful apertly, al the chance,  
 Als it byfel fyr Colgrevance.

When sho had talde him how it ferd,  
And the king hyr tale had herd, 520  
He swar by his owyn crowne,  
And his faderfowl, Uter-Pendragowne,  
That he sold se that ilk syght,  
By that day thethin a fowretenight,  
On saint Johns evyn the baptist,  
That best barn was under Crist :  
Swith, he sayd, wendes with me,  
Whofo wil that wonder se.  
The kynges word might nocht be hid,  
Over al the cowrt sone was it kyd, 530  
And thar was none so litel page  
That he ne was fayn of that vayage,  
And knyghtes and fwiers war ful fayne,  
Mysliked none bot fyr Ywayne ;  
To himself he made grete mane,  
For he wald have went allane ;  
In hert he had grete myslykyng  
For the wending of the kyng,  
Al for he hopid, withowten fayle,  
That sir Kay sold ask the batayle, 540  
Or els sir Gawayn, knyght vailant,  
And owther wald the king grant,

Whofo it wald first crave,  
Of tham two, fone might it have.  
The kynges wil wald he noght bide,  
Worth of him what may bityde,  
Bi him allane he thocht to wende,  
And tak the grace that god wald send.  
He thocht to be wele on hys way,  
Or it war pafsed the thryd day, 550  
And to afay if he myght mete  
With that ilk narow strete,  
With thornes and with breres fet,  
That mens way might lightli let;  
And also forto fynd the halde  
That fir Colgrevice of talde,  
The knyght and the mayden meke.  
The forest fast than wald he feke,  
And als the karl of Kaymes kyn,  
And the wilde beftes with him; 560  
The tre with briddes thare-opon;  
The chapel, the bacyn, and the ftone.  
His thocht wald he tel to no frende,  
Until he wyft how it wald ende.

Than went Ywaine to his yn,  
His men he fand redy thareyn,

Unto a fwier gan he faye;  
Go swith, and sadel my palfray,  
And so thou do my strang stede,  
And tak with the my best wede, 570  
At yone yate i wil out-ryde,  
Withowten town i sal the bide,  
And hy the smertly unto me,  
For i most make a jornè.  
Ogain sal thou bring my palfra,  
And forbede the oght to say,  
If thou wil any more me se,  
Lat none wit of my prevetè;  
And if ani man the oght frayn,  
Luke now lely that thou layn. 580  
Sir, he said, with ful gude will,  
Als ye byd, i sal fulfyll;  
At yowr awyn wil may ye ride,  
For me ye sal noght be ascryed.

Forth than went sir Ywayne,  
He thinkes, or he cum ogayne,  
To wreke his kofyn at his myght;  
The squier has his hernays dyght,  
He did right als his mayster red,  
His stede, his armurs, he him led. 590



When Ywayn was withowten town,  
Of his palfrey lighted he down,  
And dight him right wele in his wede,  
And lepe up on his gude stede.  
Furth he rade onone right,  
Until it neghed nere the nyght,  
He pased many high mowntayne,  
In wildernes, and mony a playne,  
Til he come to that lethir sty,  
That him byhoved pass by ; 600  
Than was he seker forto fe  
The wel, and the fayre tre ;  
The chapel saw he at the last,  
And theder hyed he ful fast ;  
More curtayse and mor honowr  
Fand he with tham in that tour,  
And mar conforth, by mony falde,  
Than Colgrevance had him of talde :  
That night was he herberd thar,  
So wele was he never are. 610

At morn he went forth by the strete,  
And with the cherele sone gan he mete,  
That sold tel to him the way,  
He sayned him, the soth to say,

Twenty sith, or ever he blan,  
Swilk mervayle had he of that man;  
For he had wonder that nature  
Myght mak so fowl a creature.  
Than to the well he rade gude pafe,  
And doun he lighted in that place, 620  
And sone the bacyn has he tane,  
And keft water upon the stane,  
And sone thar wex, withowten fayle,  
Wind, and thonor, and rayn, and haile.  
When it was fefed, than saw he  
The fowles light opon the tre,  
Thai fang ful fayre opon that thorn,  
Right als thai had done byforn;  
And sone he saw cumand a knight,  
Als fast so the fowl in flyght, 630  
With rude fembland, and sterne cher,  
And hastily he neghed nere;  
To speke of lufe na time was thar,  
For aither hated uther ful far;  
'Togeder smertly gan thai drive,  
'Thair sheldes sone bigan to ryve,  
'Thair thastes cheverd to thair hand,  
Bot thai war bath ful wele fyttand.

Out thai drogh thair fwerdes kene,  
And delt strakes tham bytwene ; 640  
Al to peces thai hewed thair sheldes,  
The culpons fleggh out in the feldes ;  
On helmes strake thay so with yre  
At ilka strake out-braist the fyr ;  
Aither of tham gude buffettes bede ;  
And nowther wald styr of the stede ;  
Ful kenely thai kyd thair myght,  
And feyned tham noght forto fight ;  
Thair hauberkes, that men myght ken,  
The blode out of thair bodyes ren. 650  
Aither on other laid so fast,  
The batayl might noght lang last ;  
Hauberkeser broken, and helmes reven,  
Stif strakes war thar gyfen ;  
Thai faght on hors stifly always,  
The batel was wele mor to prays :  
Bot, at the last, fyr Ywayne  
On his felow kyd his mayne,  
So egerly he smate him than,  
He clese the helme and the hern-pan. 660  
The knyght wist he was nere ded,  
To fle than was his best rede,

And fast he fled, with al his mayne,  
And fast folow fyr Ywayne,  
Bot he ne might him overtake,  
Tharfore grete murning gan he make;  
He folowd him ful stowtlyk,  
And wald have tane him ded or quik;  
He folowd him to the cetè,  
Na man lyfand met he.

670

When thai come to the kastel-yate,  
In he folowd fast tharate,  
At aither entrè was, i wys,  
Straytly wrought, a port-culis,  
Shod wele with yren and stele,  
And also grunden wonder wele.  
Under that than was a swyke,  
That made fyr Ywain to myslike;  
His hors fote toched thareon,  
Than fel the port-culis onone,  
Bytwyxx him and his hinder arfown,  
Thorgh fadel and stede, it smate al down;  
His spores of his heles it schare,  
Than had Ywaine murnyng mare,  
Bot so he wend have pased quite,  
That fel the tother bifor als tyte.

680

A faire grace yit fel him fwa,

Al if it smate his hors in twa,

And his spors of aither hele,

That himself pafsed fo wele.

690

Bytwene tha yates now es he tane,

Tharfor he mafe ful mykel mane,

And mikel murnyng gan he ma,

For the knyght was went him fra.

Als he was ftoke in that ftall,

He herd byhind him, in a wall,

A dor opend fair and wele,

And tharout come a damyfel,

Efter hir the dore fho ftak,

Ful hindewordes to him fho fpak.

700

Syr, fho faid, by faint Myghell,

Her thou has a febil oftell;

Thou mon be ded, es noght at laine,

For my lord that thou has flayne;

Seker it es that thou him flogh,

My lady makes forow ynogh,

And al his menye everilkane

Her has thou famen manyane,

To be thi bane er thai ful balde,

Thou brekes noght out of this halde,

710

And, for thai wate thai may noght fayl,

Thai wil the fla in playn batayl.

He sayd, Thai ne fal, so god me rede,

For al thair night, do me to dede,

Ne no handes opon me lay.

Sho said, Na, fertes, if that i may,

Al if thou be here straytly stad,

Methink thou ert noght ful adrad :

And fir, sho said, on al wise,

I aw the honor and servyse ; 720

I was in mesage at the king,

Bifor this time, whils i was ying,

I was noght than so avese,

Als a damysel aght to be,

Fro the tyme that i was lyght

In cowrt was none so hend knyght

That unto me than walde take hede

Bot thou allane, god do the mede !

Grete honor thou did to me,

And that fal i now quite the. 730

I wate, if thou be feldom sene,

Thou art the kyng son Uriene,

And thi name es fir Ywayne,

Of me may thou be fertayne,

If thou wil my kownfail leve,  
Thou fal find naman the to greve ;  
I fal lene the her ini ring,  
Bot yelde it me at myne askyng,  
When thou ert broght of al thi payn,

Yelde it than to me ogayne ;

740

Als the bark hilles the tre,  
Right so fal my ring do the ;  
When thou in hand has the stane,

Der fal thai do the nane,  
For the stane es of swilk myght,  
Of the fal men have na fyght,

Wit ye wele that fir Ywayne  
Of thir wordes was ful fayne.

In at the dore sho him led,  
And did him sit opon hir bed,

750

A quylt ful nobil lay tharon,  
Richer saw he never none.

Sho said, if he wald any thing,  
He sold be served at his liking.

He said, that ete wald he fayn.

Sho went, and come ful sone ogain ;

A capon rosted broght sho sone,

A clene klath, and brede tharone,



And a pot with riche wine,  
And a pece to fil it yne. 760  
He ete and drank, with ful gude cher,  
For tharof had he grete myster.  
When he had eten and dronken wele,  
Grete noyse he he herd in the kastele,  
Thai foght overal him to have slayn,  
To venge thair lorde war thai ful bayn,  
Or that the cors in erth was layd.  
The damysel sone to him sayd,  
Now seke thai the fast forto fla,  
Bot whofo ever com or ga, 770  
Be thou never the mor adred,  
Ne styr thou noght out of this stede :  
In this here seke thai wyll,  
Bot on this bed luke thou be styll ;  
Of tham al mak thou na force,  
Bot when that thai sal ber the cors  
Unto the kyrk forto bery,  
Than sal thou here a fary cry ;  
So sal thai mak a doleful dyn,  
Than wil thay seke the est herin ; 780  
Bot loke thou be of hert lyght,  
For of the sal thai have no fyght ;

Her fal thou be mawgre thair berd,  
And tharfor be thou noght aferd ;  
Thi famen fal be als the blynd,  
Both byfor the and byhind ;  
On ilka fide fal thou be foght :  
Now most i ga, bot drede the noght,  
For i fal do that the es lese,  
If al it turn me to mischese. 790

When sho come unto the yate,  
Ful many men fand sho tharate,  
Wele armed, and wald ful fayn  
Have taken and slane fir Ywaine,  
Half his stede thar fand thai,  
That within the yates lay,  
Bot the knight thar fand thai noght,  
Than was thar mekil forow unfoght,  
Dore ne wiindow was thar nane  
Whar he myght oway gane. 800

Thai said he sold thare be laft,  
Or els he cowth of wechecraft,  
Or he cowth of nygromancy,  
Or he had wenges for to fly.  
Hastily than went thai all,  
And foght him in the maydeus hall,

In chambers high, es noght at hide,  
And in folers on ilka side.  
Sir Ywayne saw ful wele al that,  
And still opon the bed he sat ; 810  
Thar was nane that anes mynt  
Unto the bed at fmyte a dynt,  
Al about thai smate so fast  
That mani of thair wapins braist.  
Mekyl forow thai made ilkane,  
For thai ne myght wreke thair lord bane.  
Thai went oway, with dreri chere,  
And sone tharefter come the ber,  
A lady folowd, white so mylk,  
In al that land was none swilk ; 820  
Sho wrang her fingers, out-braist the blode,  
For mekyl wa sho was nere wode,  
Hir sayr har scho alto drogh,  
And ful oft fel sho down in swogh ;  
Sho wepe, with a ful dreri voice.  
The hali water, and the croyce,  
Was born bifor the procesion,  
Thar folowd mani a moder son.  
Bifore the cors rade a knyght,  
On his stede that was ful wight, 830

In his armurs wele arayd,  
With sper and target gudely grayd.  
Than fir Ywayn herd the cry,  
And the dole of that fayr lady,  
For mor forow myght nane have  
Than sho had when he went to grave.  
Prestes and monkes, on thaire wyfe,  
Ful solempnly did the servyse.  
Als Lunet thar stode in the thrang,  
Until fir Ywaine thoght hir lang, 840  
Out of the thrang the wai sho tase,  
Unto fir Ywaine fast sho gase;  
Sho said, Sir, how ertow stad?  
I hope ful wele thou has bene rad.  
Sertes, he said, thou fais wele thar,  
So abayst was i never are.  
He said, Leman, i pray the,  
If it any wise may be,  
That i might luke a litel throw  
Out at sum hole or sum window; 850  
For wonder fayn, he sayd, wald i  
Have a fight of the lady.  
The maiden than ful sone unshet  
In a place a prevé weket,

Thar of the lady he had a fyght,  
 Lowd sho cried to god almyght,  
 " Of his fins do him pardowne,  
 For fertanly in no regyowne  
 Was never knight of his bewtè,  
 Ne efter him sal never nane be ; 860  
 In al the werld, fro end to ende,  
 Es none so curtayse, ne so hende.  
 God grant the grace thou mai won  
 In hevyn with his owyn son !  
 For so large lifes none in lede,  
 Ne none so doghty of gude dede."  
 When sho had thus made hir spell,  
 In swownyg ful oft-fithes sho fell.

Now lat we the lady be,  
 And of sir Ywaine speke we. 870  
 Luf that es so mekil of mayne,  
 Sar had wounded sir Ywayne,  
 That wharefo he sal ride or ga  
 His hert sho has that es his fa,  
 His hert he has set albydene  
 Whar him self dar noght be sene ;  
 Bot thus in langing bides he,  
 And hopes that it sal better be.

Al that war at the enterement  
Toke thair leve at the lady gent, 880  
And hame now er thai halely gane,  
And the lady left allane,  
Dweland with hir chamberer,  
And other mo that war hir der.  
Than bigan hir noyes al new,  
For forow failed hir hide and hew.  
Unto his fawl was sho ful hulde,  
Opon a fawter al of gulde,  
To say the falmes fast sho bigan,  
And toke no tent unto no man. 890  
Than had fir Ywain mekyl drede,  
For he hoped noght to fpede,  
He said, I am mekil to blame,  
That i luf tham that wald me shame,  
Bot yit i wite hir al with wogh,  
Sen that i hir lord flogh,  
I can noght se, by nakyn gyn,  
How that i hir luf fold wyn.  
That lady es ful gent and small,  
Hir yghen cler als es cristall; 900  
Sertes thar es no man olive  
That kowth hir bewtese wele describe.

Thus was fyr Ywayne fted that fefowne,  
He wrought fu mekyl ogayns refowne,  
To fet his luf in fwilk a ftede,  
Whare thai hated him to the dede :  
He fayd he fold have hir to wive,  
Or els he fold lofe his lyve.

Thus als he in ftoody fat,  
The mayden come to him with that : 910  
Sho fayd, How has to farn this day,  
Sen that i went fro the oway ?  
Sone sho faw him pale and wan,  
Sho wift wele what him ayled than ;  
Sho faid, I wote thi hert es fet,  
And fertes i ne fal noght it let,  
Bot i fal help the fra prefowne,  
And bring the to thi warifowne.  
He faid, Sertes, damyfele,  
Out of this place wil i noght fle, 920  
Bot i wil wende by dayes lyght,  
That men may of me have fight,  
Opinly on ilka fyde,  
Worth of me what fo bityde ;  
Manly wil i hethin wende.  
Than answerd the mayden hende :



Sir, thou sal wend with honowr,  
For thou sal have ful gude focowr ;  
Bot, fir, thou sal be her fertayne,  
A while unto i cum ogayne: 930  
Sho [kend] altrewly his entent,  
And tharfor es sho wightly went  
Unto the lady faire and bright,  
For unto hir right wele sho myght  
Say what-fom hyr willes es,  
For sho was al hir maystres,  
Her keper, and hir cownsayler :  
To hir sho faid, als ye sal her,  
Bytwix tham twa in gude cownsayl :  
Madame, sho fayd, i have mervayl 940  
That ye forow thus ever onane ;  
For goddes luf lat be yowr mane ;  
Ye sold think over alkyn thyng,  
Of the kinges Arthurgh cumyng.  
Menes yow noght of the mesfage  
Of the damyfel savage,  
That in hir lettre to yow fend ;  
Allas, who sal yow now defend,  
Yowr land, and al that es tharyn ?  
Sen ye wil never of wepeing blyn. 950

A madame, takes tent to me,  
Ye ne have na knyght in this cuntre,  
That durst right now his body bede,  
Forto do a doghty dede,  
Ne fortो bide the mekil boſte  
Of king Arthurgh and of his oſte,  
And if he find none hym ogayn,  
Yowr landes er lorn, this es fertayn.

The lady underſtode ful wele  
How ſho hyr cownſaild ilka dele, 960  
Sho bad hyr go hir way ſmertly,  
And that ſho war na mor hardy  
Swilk wordes to hyr at ſpeke,  
For wa hir hert wold alto breke.  
Sho bad go wightly hethin oway.  
Than the maiden thus gan ſay :  
Madame, it es oft wemens will  
Tham fortो blame that fais tham ſcill.  
Sho went oway als ſho noght roght,  
And than the lady hyr bythoght 970  
That the maiden ſaid no wrang,  
And ſo ſho ſat in ſtody lang.

In ſtody thus allane ſho ſat,  
The mayden come ogayn with that :

Madame, sho said, ye er a barn,  
Thus may ye sone yowr self forfarn.  
Sho sayd, chaftise thy hert madame,  
To swilk a lady it es grete shame  
Thus to wepe, and make slike cry,  
Think upon thi grete gentri. 980  
Trowes thou the flowr of chevalry  
Sold al with thi lord dy,  
And with him be put in molde?—  
God forbede that it so folde!  
Als gude als he, and better bene.  
Thou lyes, sho sayd, by hevyn quene.  
Lat se if thoue me tel kan,  
Whar es any so doghty man  
Als he was that wedded me.  
“ Yis, and ye kun me na mawgrè, 990  
And that ye mak me sekernes,  
That ye fal luf me nevertheles.”  
Sho said, Thou may be ful fertayn,  
That for na thing that thou mai fayn,  
Wil i me wreth on nane maner.  
Madame, sho said, than fal ye her:  
I fal yow tel a prevetè,  
And na ma fal wit bot we.

Yf twa knyghtes be in the felde,  
On twa stedes, with sperc and shelde, 1000  
And the tane the tother may fla,  
Whether es the better of tha ?  
Sho faid, He that has the bataile.  
Ya, faid the mayden, fawnfayle,  
The knyght that lifes es mar of maine,  
Than yowr lord that was slayne ;  
Yowr lord fled out of the place,  
And the tother gan hym chace  
Heder into his awyn halde,  
Thar may ye wit he was ful balde. 1010  
The lady faid, This es grete scorne,  
That thou nevyns him me biforne,  
Thou fais nowther soth, ne right,  
Swith out of myne eghen fyght !  
The mayden faid, So mot i the,  
Thus ne hight ye noght me,  
That ye fold so me mysfay.  
With that sho turned hir oway,  
And hastily sho went ogayn,  
Unto the chameber to sir Ywayne. 1020  
The lady thocht than, al the nyght,  
How that sho had na knyght,

Forto feke hir land thorghout,  
To kepe Arthurgh and hys rowt.  
Than bigan hir forto shame,  
And hir self fast forto blame;  
Unto hir self fast gan sho flyte,  
And said, With wrang now i hir wite;  
Now hopes sho i will never mar  
Luf hir, als i have done ar; 1030  
I wil hir luf, with main and mode,  
For that sho said was for my gode.

On the morn the mayden rafe,  
And unto chamber fone sho gafe;  
Thar sho fyndes the faire lady  
Hingand hir hevyd ful drerily,  
In the place whar sho hir left,  
And ilka dele sho talde hir eft,  
Als sho had said to hir bifor.  
Than said the lady, Me, rewes for, 1040  
That i misfayd the yisterday,  
I wil amend if that i may;  
Of that knyght now wald i her,  
What he war, and whether he wer;  
I wate that i have fayed omys,  
Now wil i do als thou, me wys :

Tel me baldely, or thou blin,  
If he be cumen of gentil kyn.  
Madame, sho said, i dar warand  
A genteler lord es none lifand. 1050  
The hendest man ye sal him fynde,  
That ever come of Adams kynde.  
“ How hat he ? sai me for fertayne.”  
Madame, sho said, fir Ywayne,  
So gentil knight have ye noght sene,  
He es the kings son Uryene,  
Sho held hir paid of that tithyng,  
For that his fader was a kyng.  
“ Do me have him here in my sight,  
Bitwene this and the thrid night,” 1060  
And ar if that it are myght be,  
Me langes far him forto se ;  
Bring him if thou mai this night.”  
Madame, sho sayd, that i ne might,  
For his wonyng es hethin oway,  
More than the jorne of a day ;  
Bot i have a wele rinand page,  
Wil stirt thider right in a stage,  
And bring him by to morn at nyght.  
The lady saide, Loke, yf he myght 1070

To-morn by evyn be here ogayn.

Sho faid, Madame, With al his mayn.

“ Bid him hy, on alkyn wyfe,

He fal be quit wele his servyfe,

Avancement fal be hys bone,

If he wil do this erand sone.”

Madame, sho faid, i dar yow hight,

To have him her or the thrid nyght ;

Towhils efter yowr kownsfayl send,

And ask tham wha fal yow defend, 1080

Yowr well, yowr land, kastel, and towr,

Ogayns the nobil king Arthur,

For thar es nane of tham ilkane

That dar the batel undertane.

Than fal ye fay, nedes bus me take

A lorde to do that ye forsake :

Nedes bus yow have sum nobil knyght

That wil and may defend yowr right ;

And fais also to suffer ded

Ye wil noght do out of thair rede : 1090

Of that worde fal thai be blyth,

And thank yow ful many fithe.

The lady faid, By god of myght,

I fal arefon tham this night ;



Me think thou dwelles ful lang her,  
Send forth fwith thi mesfanger.

Than was the lady blith and glad,  
Sho did al als hir mayden bad,  
Efter hir cownfail sho sent onane,  
And bad thai fold cum sone ilkane. 1100

The maiden redies hyr ful rath,  
Bilive sho gert fyr Ywaine bath,  
And cled him sethin in gude scarlet,  
Forord wele and with gold fret,  
A girdel ful riche for the nanes,  
Of perry and of preciows stanes.  
Sho talde him al how he fold do,  
When that he come the lady to;  
And thus when he was alredy,  
Sho went and talde to hyr lady, 1110  
That cumen was hir mesfager.

Sho said smertly, Do lat me her,  
Cumes he sone, als have thou wyn?  
Medame, sho said, i fal noght blin,  
Or that he be byfor yow here.  
Than said the lady, with light cher,  
Go bring him heder prevely,  
That none wit bot thou and i:

Than the maiden went ogayn,  
Haftily to fir Ywayn : 1120  
Sir, ſho ſayd, als have i wyn,  
My lady wate thou ert hereyn ;  
To cum bifer hir luke thou be balde,  
And tak gode tent what i have talde.  
By the hand ſho toke the knyght,  
And led him unto chamber right,  
Byfor hir lady, es noght at layne,  
And of that come was ſho ful fayne ;  
Bot yit fir Ywayne had grete drede,  
When he unto chamber yede. 1130  
The chamber flore, and als the bed,  
With klothos of gold was al over ſpred,  
Hir thought he was withowten lac,  
Bot no word to him ſho ſpak,  
And he for dred oway he drogh,  
Than the mayden ſtode and logh :  
Sho ſayd, Mawgre have that knyght,  
That haves of ſwilk a lady fyght,  
And can noght ſhew to hir his nede ;  
Cum furth fir, the thar noght drede, 1140  
That mi lady wil the ſinyte,  
Sho loves the wele withowten lite,

Pray to hir of hir mercy,  
And for thi fake right so fal i,  
That sho forgif the, in this fiede,  
Of Salados the rouse ded,  
That was hir lord that thou has slayne.

On knese him fet than fyr Ywaine :

“ Madame, i yelde me yow untill,

Ever to be at yowre wyll, 1150

Yf that i might i ne wald noght fle.

Sho said, Nay, whi fold so be ?

To ded yf i gert do the now,

To me it war ful litel prow,

Bot for i find the so bowfum,

That thou wald thus to me cum,

And for thou dose the in my grace,

I forgif the thi trispase.

Syt down, sho said, and lat me her,

Why thou ert thus deboner. 1160

Madame, he said, anis, with a luke,

Al my hert with the thou toke,

Sen i first of the had fyght,

Have i the lufed with al my might,

To mo than the, mi lady hende,

Sal never mor my luf wende.

For thi luf ever i am redy,

Lely forto lif or dy.

Sho faid, Dar thou wele undertake

In my land pefe forto make, 1170

And forto maintene al mi rightes,

Ogayns king Arthur and his knyghtes ?

He faid, That dar i undertane,

Ogaynes ilka lyfand man.

Swilk kownfail byfor had sho tane,

Sho faid, Sir, than er we at ane.

Hir barons hir ful rathly red

To tak a lord hir forto wed.

Than hastily she went to hall,

Thar abade hir barons all, 1180

Forto hald thair parlement,

And mari hir by thair asent.

Sho fayd, Sirs, with an acorde,

Sen me bus nedely have a lord,

My landes forto lede and yeme,

Sais me fone howe ye wil deme.

Madame, thai faid, how so ye will,

Al we fal asent thartyll.

Than the lady went ogayne,

Unto chameber to sir Ywayne: 1190

Sir, sho said, so god me save,  
Other lorde wil i nane have,  
If i the left i did noght right,  
A kingson and a noble knyght.

Now has the maiden done hir thought,

Sir Ywayne out of anger broght,

The lady led him unto hall,

Ogains him rase the barons all,

And al thai said, Ful sekerly,

This knight sal wed the lady;

1200

And ilkane said, tham-felf bitwene,

So fair a man had thai noght sene,

For his bewtè in hal and bowr,

Him semes to be an emperowr;

We wald that thai war trowth-plight,

And weded sone this ilk nyght.

The lady fet hir on the dese,

And cumand al to hald thaire pefe;

And bad hir steward sumwhat say,

Or men went fra cowrt oway :

1210

The steward said, Sirs, understandes,

Wer es waxen in thir landes,

The king Arthur es redy dight

To be her byn this fowretenyght,

He and his menye ha thocht  
To win this land if thai mought ;  
Thai wate ful wele that he es ded  
That was lord her in this stede,  
None es so wight wapins to welde,  
Ne that so boldly mai us belde, 1220  
And wemen may maintene no stowr,  
Thai most nedes have a governowre,  
Tharfor mi lady most nede  
Be weded hastily for drede,  
And to na lord wil sho tak tent  
Bot if it be by yowr asfent.  
Than the lordes, al on raw,  
Held tham wele payd of this saw,  
Al asfented hyr untill  
To tak a lord at hyr owyn wyll. 1230  
Than said the lady, onone right,  
How hald ye yow paid of this knight ?  
He profers hym, on al wyse,  
To myne honor and my fervyse ;  
And fertes, firs, the soth to say,  
I saw him never or this day ;  
Bot talde unto me has it bene  
He es the kyngson Uriene,

He es cumen of hegh parage,  
And wonder doghty of vascelage, 1240  
War and wise and ful curtayse,  
He yernes me to wise alwayse,  
And ner the lefe i wate he might  
Have wele better, and so war right.  
With a voice halely thai sayd,  
Madame, ful wele we hald us payd ;  
Bot hastes fast, al that ye may,  
'That ye war wedded this ilk day :  
And grete prayer gan thai make,  
On alwise that sho suld hym take. 1250

Sone unto the kirk thai went,  
And war wedded in thair present ;  
'Thar wedded Ywayne in plevyne  
The riche lady Alundyne,  
The dukes doghter of Landuit ;  
Els had hyr lande bene destruyt.  
Thus thai made the maryage,  
Omang al the riche barnage,  
Thai made ful mekyl mirth that day,  
Ful grete festes on gude aray. 1260  
Grete mirthes made thai in that fiȝde,  
And al forgetyn es now the ded.



Of him that was thair lord fre,  
Thai fay that this es worth fwilk thre,  
And, that thai lufed him mekil mor,  
Than him that lord was thare byfor.

The bridal fat, for soth to tell,  
Til kyng Arthur come to the well,  
With al his knyghtes everilkane,  
Byhind leved thar noght ane. 1270  
Than sayd sir Kay, Now whar es he  
That made slike boft her forto be,  
Forto venge his cosyn-germayne?  
I wist his wordes war al in vayne;  
He made grete bofte bifer the quene,  
And her now dar he noght be fene;  
His prowde wordes er now al purst,  
For, in fayth, ful ill he durst  
Anes luke opon that knyght,  
That he made boft with to fyght. 1280  
Than sayd Gawayn hastily,  
Syr, for goddes luf, mercy,  
For i dar hete the for fertayne  
That we sal here of sir Ywayne,  
This ilk day, that be thou balde,  
Bot he be ded or done in halde:

And never in no cumpany  
Herd i him speke the velany.  
Than sayd sir Kay, Lo, at thi will,  
Fra this time forth i sal be still. 1290

The king kest water on the stane,  
The storme rafe ful sone onane,  
With wikked weders kene and calde,  
Als it was byfore-hand talde ;  
The king and his men ilkane  
Wend tharwith to have bene flane ;  
So blew it stor with flete and rayn :  
And hastily than syr Ywayne  
Dight him graythly in his ger,  
With nobil shelde and strong sper. 1300  
When he was dight in feker wede,  
Than he umstrade a nobil stede,  
Him thocht that he was als lyght,  
Als a fowl es to the flyght,  
Unto the well fast wendes he,  
And sone when thai myght him se,  
Syr Kay, for he wald noght fayle,  
Smerlytly askes the batayl ;  
And alfone than said the kyng,  
Sir Kay, i grante the thine askyng. 1310

Than fir Ywayn neghed tham, ner,  
Thair cowntenance to se and her;  
Sir Kay than on his stede gan spring.  
Ber the wele now, fayd the kyng.  
Ful glad and blith was fyr Ywayne,  
When fir Kay come him ogayn;  
Bot Kay wist nocht wha it was,  
He findes his fer now or he pas;  
Syr Ywayne thinkes now to be wroken,  
On the grete wordes that Kay has spoken. 1320

Thai rade togeder with speres kene,  
Thar was no reverence tham bitwene;  
Sir Ywayn gan fir Kay bere,  
Out of his fadel lenkith of his sper,  
His helm unto the erth smate,  
A fote depe tharin yt bate;  
He wald do him na mor despite,  
Bot down he lighted als tyte,  
Sir Kay stede he toke in hy,  
And presand the king ful curtaysly. 1330  
Wonder glad than war thai all,  
That Kay so fowl a shame gan fall,  
And ilkone fayd til other then,  
This es he that scornes al men.

Of his wa war thai wele paid.  
Syr Ywain than to the kyng said,  
Sir kyng, i gif to the this stede,  
For he may help the in thi nede,  
And to me war it grete trispas  
Forto withhald that yowres was. 1340  
What man ertow? quod the kyng,  
Of the have i na knawying,  
Bot if thou unarmed were,  
Or els thi name that i might her.  
Lord, he sayd, i am Ywayne.  
Than was the king ferly fayne.  
A fari man than was fir Kay,  
That said that he was stollen oway,  
Al descumfite he lay on grownde,  
To him that was a fary stownde. 1350  
The king and his men war ful glad,  
That thai so fyr Ywayne had,  
And ful glad was fir Gawayne,  
Of the welesar of fir Ywayne,  
For nane was to him half so der  
Of al that in the court were.

The king fir Ywayn sone bifoght,  
To tel him al how he had wrought,

And sone fir Ywaine gan him tell  
Of al his far how it byfell, 1360  
With the knight how that he sped,  
And how he had the lady wed,  
And how the mayden hym helpid wele :  
Thus tald he to him ilka dele.

Sir kyng, he sayd, i yow byseke,  
And al yowr menye milde and meke,  
That ye wald grante to me that grace  
At wend with me to my purchace,  
And se my kastel and my towre,  
Than myght ye do me grete honowr. 1370  
The kyng granted him ful right  
To dwel with him a fowretenyght.  
Sir Ywayne thanked him oft sith,  
The knyghtes war al glad and blyth  
With fir Ywaine forto wend,  
And sone a squier has he fend :  
Unto the kastel the way he nome,  
And warned the lady of thair come,  
And that his lord come with the kyng ;  
And, when the lady herd this thing, 1380  
It es no lifand man with mowth  
That half hir cumforth tel kowth.

## YWAINE AND GAWIN.

Haftily that lady hende  
Cumand al hir men to wende,  
And dight tham in thair best aray,  
To kepe the king that ilk day.  
Thai keped him in riche wede,  
Rydeand on many a nobil stede,  
Thai hailfed him ful curtaysly,  
And alfo al his cumpany. 1390

Thai faid he was worthy to dowt,  
That fo fele folk led obowt.  
Thar was grete joy, i yow bihete,  
With clothes fprede in ilka strete,  
And damyfels danceand ful wele,  
With trompes, pipes, and with fristele ;  
The castel and ceté rang  
With mynstralsi and nobil fang ;  
Thai ordand tham ilkane in fer,  
To kepe the king on fair maner. 1400  
The lady went withowten towne,  
And with hir many bald barowne,  
Cled in purpur and ermyne,  
With girdels al of gold ful fyne.  
The lady made ful meri chere,  
Sho was al dight with drewries der ;

About hir was ful mekyl thrang,  
The puple cried, and sayd omang,  
Welkum ertou, kyng Arthoure,  
Of al this werld thou beres the flour, 1410  
Lord kyng of all kynges,  
And blefled be he that the brynges.

When the lady the kyng saw,  
Unto him fast gan sho draw,  
To hald his fterap whils he lyght,  
Bot fone when he of hir had fyght,  
With mekyl myrth thai famen met,  
With hende wordes sho him gret.  
A thowfand fithes, Welkum, sho fays,  
And fo es fir Gawayne the curtayfe. 1420  
The king fald, Lady, white fo flour,  
God gif the joy and mekil honowr,  
For thou ert fayr with body gent;  
With that he hir in armes hent,  
And ful fair he gan hir falde,  
Thar was many to bihalde.  
It es no man with tong may tell  
The mirth that was tham omell;  
Of maidens was thar fo gude wane,  
That ilka knight myght tak ane. 1430



Ful mekil joy fyr Ywayn made,  
That he the king til his hows hade,  
The lady omang tham al famen  
Made ful mekyl joy and gamen.

In the kastel thus thai dwell,  
Ful mekyl myrth wafe tham omell.  
The king was thare with his knyghtes  
Aght dayes and aght nyghtes,  
And Ywayn tham ful mery made,  
With alkyn gamyn tham for to glade; 1440  
He prayed the kyng to thank the may  
That hym had helpid in his jornay,  
And ilk day had thai solace fer  
Of huntynge and als of revere,  
For thar was a ful fayre cuntrè,  
With wodes and parkes grete plentè,  
And castels wroght with lyme and stane,  
That Ywayne with his wife had tane.

Now wil the king no langer lende,  
Bot til his cuntre wil he wende. 1450  
Ay whils thai war thar, for fertayne,  
Syr Gawayn did al his mayne  
To pray fir Ywayne, on al maner,  
For to wende with tham in fere:

He said, Sir, if thou ly at hame,  
Wonderly men wil the blame ;  
That knyght es nothing to set by  
That levesal his chevalry,  
And ligges bekeand in his bed,  
When he haves a lady wed. 1460  
For when that he has grete endose  
Than war tyme to win his lose ;  
For, when a knyght es chevalrouse,  
His lady es the more jelows ;  
Also sho lufes him wele the bet :  
Tharfore, fir, thou sal noght let  
To haunt armes in ilk cuntrè,  
Than wil men wele mor prayse the ;  
Thou hase inogh to thi despens,  
Now may thow wele hante turnamentes ; 1470  
Thou and i sal wende in fer,  
And i wil be at thi banere.  
I dar noght say, so god me glad,  
If i so fayr a leman had ;  
That i ne most leve al chevalry,  
At hame ydel with hir to ly,  
Bot yit a sole, that litel kan,  
May wele cownfail another man.

So lang fir Gawayn prayed fo,  
Sir Ywayne grantes him forto go 1480  
Unto the lady, and tak his leve;  
Loth him was hir forto greve.  
Til hyr onane the way he nome,  
Bot sho ne wist nocht whi he come;  
In his arms he gan hir mete,  
And thus he said, My leman fwete,  
My life, my hele, and al my hert,  
My joy, my comforth, and my quert,  
A thing prai i the unto,  
For thine honor and myne also. 1490  
The lady said, Sir, verrayment,  
I wil do al yowr cumandment.  
Dame, he said, i wil the pray,  
That i might the king cumvay,  
And also with my feres founde,  
Armes forto haunte a stownde,  
For in bourding men wald me blame,  
If i sold now dwel at hame.  
The lady was loth him to greve;  
Sir, sho said, i gif yow leve, 1500  
Until a terme that i fal fayn,  
Bot that ye cum than ogayn.

Al this yer hale i yow grante  
Dedes of armes for to hante,  
Bot, fyr, als ye luf me dere,  
On al wife that ye be her  
This day twelmoth, how som it be,  
For the luf ye aw to me;  
And, if ye com noght by that day,  
My luf fal ye lose for ay : 1510  
Avise yow wele now or ye gone,  
This day is the evyn ef faint Jon,  
That warn i yow now or ye wende,  
Luke ye cum by the twelmoth ende.  
Dame, he sayd, i fal noght let,  
To hald the day that thou has fet,  
And, if i might be at my wyll,  
Ful oft ar fold i cum ye till;  
Bot, madame, this understandes,  
A man that pases divers landes 1520  
May sumtyme cum in grete destres,  
In pefon, or els in sekenes,  
Tharfore i pray yow or i ga,  
That ye wil out-tak thir twa.  
The lady sayd, This grant i wele,  
Als ye ask, everilka dele,

And i fal lene to yow my ring,  
That es to me a ful der thing,  
In nane anger fal ye be,  
Whils ye it have and thinkes on me. 1530  
I fal tel to yow onane  
The vertu that es in the stane :  
It es, na pefon yow fal halde,  
Al if yowr fase be many falde ;  
With sekenes fal ye noght be tane ;  
Ne of yowr blode ye fal lese nane ;  
In hatel tane fal ye noght be,  
Whils ye it have and thinkes on me ;  
And ay, whils ye er trew of love,  
Over al fal ye be above ; 1540  
I wald never for nakyn wight,  
Lene it ar unto na knyght,  
For grete luf i it yow take,  
Yemes it wele now for my sake.  
Sir Ywayne said, Dame, gramercy.  
Than he gert ordain in hy  
Armurs, and al other gere,  
Stalworth stedes, both sheld and sper,  
And also squyer, knave, and fwayne :  
Ful glad and blith was fir Gawayne. 1550

No lenger wald fyr Ywayne byde,  
On his stede sone gan he stride ;  
And thus he has his leve tane,  
For him murned many ane.  
The lady toke leve of the kyng,  
And of his menyé ald and ying ;  
Hir lord fir Ywayne sho bifekes,  
With teris trikland on hir chekes,  
On al wife that he noght let  
To halde the day that he had fet. 1560  
The knightes thus thair ways er went,  
To justing and to turnament ;  
Ful dughtily did fir Ywayne,  
And also did fir Gawayne ;  
Thai war ful doghty both in fer,  
Thai wan the prise both fer and ner.

The kyng that time at Cester lay,  
The knightes went tham for to play,  
Ful really thai rade about,  
Al that twelmoth out and out, 1570  
To justing and to turnament,  
Thai wan grete wirships als thai went.  
Sir Ywayne oft had al the lose,  
Of him the word ful wide gofe ;

Of thair dedes was grete renown  
To and fra in towre and towne.

On this wise in this life thai last  
Unto faint Johns day was past;  
Than hastily thai hied home,  
And sone unto the kyng thai come;  
And thar thai held grete mangeri,  
The kyng with al his company.

Sir Ywayne umbithought him than  
He had forgeten his leman;

Broken i have hir cumandment  
Sertes, he said, now be i shent;

The terme es past that sho me set,  
How ever fal this bale be bet?

Unnethes he might him hald fra wepe,  
And right in this than toke he kepe.

Into court come a damysele,  
On a palfrey ambland wele,

And egerly down gan sho lyght,  
Withouten help of knave or knyght,

And sone sho lete hyr mantel fall,  
And hasted hir fast into hall;

Sir kyng, sho sayd, god mot the fe,  
My lady gretes the wele by me,



And also, fir, gude Gawayne,  
And al thi knyghtes, bot fir Ywayne, 1600  
He es ateyned for traytur,  
And fals and lither losenjoure ;  
He has bytrayed my lady,  
Bot sho es war with his gilry ;  
Sho hopid noght, the soth to fay,  
That he wald so have stollen oway ;  
He made to hir ful mekyl boste,  
And said of al he lufed hir mooste ;  
Al was trefon and trechery,  
And that he fal ful der haby. 1610  
It es ful mekyl ogains the right  
To cal so fals a man a knight.  
My lady wend he had hir hert,  
Ay forto kepe and hald in quert ;  
Bot now with grefe he has hir gret,  
And broken the term that sho him fet,  
That was the evyn of saynt John,  
Now es that tyme for ever gone ;  
So lang gaf sho him respite,  
And thus he haves hir led with lite ; 1620  
Certainly so fals a fode,  
Was never cuinen of kynges blode,

That so sone forgot his wyfe,  
That lofed him better than hyr life.  
Til Ywayn fais sho, Thus thou es  
Traytur untrew, and trowthles,  
And also an unkind cumlyng;  
Deliver me my lady ring.  
Sho stirt to him, with sterne loke,  
The ring fro his finger sho toke, 1630  
And, alfone als sho had the ring,  
Hir leve toke sho of the king,  
And stirted up on hir palfray,  
With-owten more sho went hir way;  
With hir was nowther knave ne grome,  
Ne no man wist wher sho bycome.

Sir Ywayn, when he this gan her,  
Murned, and made simpil cher,  
In sorow than so was he stad,  
That nere for murnyng wex he mad, 1640  
It was no mirth that him myght mend,  
At worth to noght ful wele he wend,  
For wa he es ful wil of wane:  
“Allas! i am myne owin bane.”  
Allas, he sayd, that i was born!  
Have i my leman thus forlorn?

And al es for myne owen foly,  
Allas ! this dole wil mak me dy.  
An evyl toke him als he stode,  
For wa he wex al wilde and wode ; 1650  
Unto the wod the way he nome,  
No man wist whor he bycome.  
Obout he welk in the forest,  
Als it wore a wilde beste,  
His men on ilka fyde has foght,  
Fer and ner, and findes him noght.

On a day, als Ywayne ran  
In the wod, he met a man,  
Arowes brade and bow had he,  
And when fir Ywayne gan him se, 1660  
To him he stirt, with birful grim,  
His bow and arwes rest he him,  
Ilka day than at the leste,  
Shot he him a wilde beste ;  
Flefs he wan him, ful gude wane,  
And of his arows lost he nane.  
Thare he lifed a grete sesowne,  
With rotes, and raw venysfowne,  
He drank of the warm blode,  
And that did him mekil gode. 1670

Als he went in that boskage,  
He fand a letil ermytage;  
The ermyte saw, and sone was war  
A naked man a bow bar,  
He hoped he was wode that tide,  
Tharfor no lenger durst he bide;  
He sperd his yate, and in he ran,  
For fered of that wode man;  
And, for him thought it charite,  
Out at his window set he 1680  
Brede and water for the wode man,  
And tharto ful sone he ran.  
Swilk als he had swilk he him gaf,  
Barly brede with al the chaf;  
Tharof ete he ful gude wane,  
And are swilk ete he never nane.  
Of the water he drank thar-with,  
Than ran he forth into the frith.  
For, if a man be never so wode,  
He wil kum whare man dose him gode; 1690  
And sertanly so did Ywayne,  
Everilka day he come ogayne,  
And with him broght he redy boun  
Ilka day new venisowne,

He laid it at the ermite yate,  
And ete, and drank, and went his gate.  
Ever, alfone als he was gane,  
The ermyt toke the flesh onane,  
He flogh it, and feth it fayr and wele,  
Than had Ywayne, at ilka mele, 1700  
Brede and sothen venyfowne.  
Than went the ermyte to the towne,  
And salde the skinner that he broght,  
And better brede tharwith he boght.  
Than fand fir Ywayne in that stede  
Venyson and better brede.  
This life led he ful fele yer,  
And fethen he wrought als ye sal her.

Als Ywayne sleped under a tre  
By him come thar rideand thre, 1710  
A lady, twa bour-wemen alswa,  
Than spak ane of the maidens twa,  
A naked [man] me think i fe,  
Wit i wil what it may be.  
Sho lighted doun, and to him yede,  
And unto him sho toke gude hede;  
Hir thoght wele sho had him fene  
In many stedes whar sho had bene;

Sho was astonayd in that stownde,  
For in hys face sho saw a wonde, 1720  
Bot it was heled and hale of hew,  
'Tharby hir thoght that sho him knew.  
Sho sayd, By god, that me has made;  
Swilk a wound fir Ywayne hade,  
Sertaynly this ilk es he :  
Allas, sho sayd, how may this be ?  
Allas, that him es thus bityd !  
So nobil a knyght als he was kyd !  
It es grete sorow that he sold be  
So ugly now opon to fe. 1730  
So tenderly for him sho gret,  
That hir teres al hir chekes wet.  
Madame, sho said, for fertayn,  
Her have we funden fir Ywayne,  
The best knyght that on grund mai ga,  
Allas, him es bytid so wa !  
In sum sorow was he stad,  
And tharfore es he waxen mad ;  
Sorow wil meng a mans blode,  
And make him forto wax wode. 1740  
Madame, and he war now in quert,  
And al hale of will and hert,

Ogayns yowr fa he wald yow wer,  
That has yow done so mekyl der;  
And he war hale, so god me mend,  
Yowr sorow war sone broght to end.

The lady said, And this ilk be he,  
And than he wil noght hethin fle,  
Thorgh goddes help, than hope i yit

We fal him win ynto his wyt; 1750

Swith at hame i wald we wer,

For thar i have an unement der,

Morgan the wife gaf it to me,

And said, als i fal tel to the;

He sayd, This unement es so gode,

That, if a man be brayn-wode,

And he war anes anoynt with yt,

Smertly fold he have his wit.

Fro hame thai wer bot half a myle,

Theder come thai in a whyle; 1760

The lady sone the boyft has foght,

And the unement has sho broght.

Have, sho said, this unement her,

Unto me it es ful dere;

And smertly that thou wend ogayne,

Bot luke thou spend it noght in vaine;



And, fra the knight anoynted be,  
That thou leves bring it to me.  
Hastily that maiden meke  
Tok hofe, and shofe, and ferk, and breke ; 1770  
A riche robe als gan sho ta,  
And a faint of filk alfwa,  
And also a gude palfray,  
And smertly come sho whar he lay.  
On flepe fast yit sho him fande,  
Hir hors until a tre sho band,  
And hastily to him sho yede,  
And that was a ful hardy dede ;  
Sho enoynt his heved wele,  
And his body ilka dele. 1780  
Sho despended al ye unement,  
Over hir ladies cumandment ;  
For hir lady wald sho nocht let,  
Hir thocht that it was ful wele fet.  
Al his atyre sho left hym by,  
At his rising to be redy,  
That he might him cleth and dyght,  
Or he fold of hyr have fyght.

Than he wakend of his flepe,  
The maiden to him toke gude kepe, 1790

He loked up ful farily,  
And said, Lady, faynt Mary,  
What hard grāce to me es maked,  
That i am her now thus naked ?  
Allas, wher any have her bene,  
I trow sum has my sorow sene.  
Lang he sat so in a thoght  
How that ger was theder broght.  
Than had he noght so mekyl myght  
On his fete to stand up-right, 1800  
Him failed might of fote and hand  
That he myght nowther ga ne stand ;  
Bot yit his clathes on he wan ;  
Tharfor ful wery was he than ;  
Than had he mifter forto mete  
Sum man that myght his bales bete.  
Than lepe the maiden on hir palfray,  
And nere byside him made hir way ;  
Sho lete als sho him noght had sene,  
Ne wetyn that he thar had bene. 1810  
Sone, when he of hir had syght,  
He cried unto hyr, on hight.  
Than wald sho no ferrer ride  
Bot fast sho loked on ilka fyde ;

And waited about fer and ner,  
He cried, and sayd, I am her.  
Than sone sho rade him till,  
And sayd, Sir, what es thi will.  
“ Lady, thi help war me ful lese,  
For i am her in grete meschefe ; 1820  
I ne wate never by what chance,  
That i have al this grevance,  
Pur charite, i wald ye pray  
For to lene me that palfray,  
That in thi hand es redy bowne,  
And wis me sone unto fom towne.  
I wate noght how i had this wa,  
Ne how that i fal hethin ga.”  
Sho answerd him, with wordes hende,  
Syr, if thou wil with me wende, 1830  
Ful gladly wil i ese the  
Until that thou amended be.  
Sho helped him upon his hors ryg,  
And sone thai come until a bryg,  
Into the water the boist sho cast,  
And sethin hame sho hied fast.

When thai come to the castel yate,  
Thai lighted and went in tharate.

The maiden to the chameber went,  
The lady asked the unement. 1840  
Madame, sho said, the boyft es lorn,  
And so was i nerehand tharforne.  
How fo, sho said, for goddes tre?  
Madame, sho said, i fal tel the  
Al the soth how that it was :  
Als i over the brig fold pas,  
Evyn in myddes, the soth to fay,  
Thar stombild my palfray ;  
On the brig he fell al flat,  
And the boyft, right with that, 1850  
Fel frame in the water down,  
And had i noght bene titter boun  
To tak my palfray bi the mane,  
The water fone had bene my bane.  
The lady said, Now am i shent,  
That i have lorn my gude unement,  
It was to me, fo god me glade,  
The best trefur that ever i hade ;  
To me it es ful mekil skath,  
Bot better es lose it than yow bath. 1860  
Wend, sho said, unto the knight,  
And luke thou ese him at thi myght.

Lady, sho said, els war me lathe.  
Than sho gert him washe and bathe,  
And gaf him mete and drink of main,  
Til he had geten his might ogayn.  
Thai ordand armurs ful wele dight,  
And so thai did stedes ful wight.

So it fell sone on a day,  
Whils he in the castel lay, 1870  
The ryche cryl, syr Alers,  
With knightes, serjantes, and swiers,  
And with swith grete vetale,  
Come that kastel to asayle.  
Sir Ywain than his armurs tase,  
With other focure that he hase,  
The erel he kepes in the felde,  
And sone he hit anc on the shelde,  
That the knyght, and als the stede,  
Stark ded to the erth thai yede, 1880  
Sone another, the thrid, the ferth,  
Feld he doun ded on the erth.  
He stird him so omang tham than,  
At ilka dint he slogh a man,  
Sum he lofed of hys men,  
Bot the eril lost swilk ten;

Al thai fled fast fra that fyde  
Whar thai saw fir Ywayn ride,  
He herted so his cumpany,  
The moſte coward was ful hardy, 1890  
To fel al that thai fand in felde.  
The lady lay ever and bihelde :  
Sho fais, Yon es a noble knyght,  
Ful eger and of ful grete myght ;  
He es wele worthy forto prayfe  
That es ſo doghty and curtayſe.  
The mayden ſaid, with owten let,  
Yownoynement mai ye think wele ſet ;  
Se, ſe, madame, how he prikes !  
And ſe, ſe, alſo, how ſele he ſtrikes ! 1900  
Lo, how he fars omang his faſe !  
Al that he hittes ſone he flaſe ;  
War thar ſwilk other twa als he,  
Than hope i ſone thair faſe fold fle ;  
Sertes, than fold we ſe ful tyte,  
The eril fold be diſcumfite.  
Madame, god gif his wil wer  
To wed yow and be loverd here.  
The erils folk went faſt to ded,  
To fle than was his beſt rede ; 1910

The eril sone bigan to fle,  
And than might men bourd fe,  
How fir Ywayne and his feres  
Folowd tham on fel maners,  
And fast thai slogh the erils men,  
Olive thai left noght over ten ;  
The eril fled ful fast for drede,  
And than fir Ywaine strake his stede,  
And over-toke him in that tide,  
At a kastel thar byfyde ;  
Sir Ywayne sone with-fet the yate,  
That the eril myght noght in tharate.  
The eril saw al might noght gain,  
He yalde him sone to fir Ywayn,  
And sone he has his trowth plyght  
To wend with him that ilk night  
Unto the lady of grete renowne,  
And profer him to hir presowne,  
And to do him in hir grace,  
And also to mend his trispafe.  
The eril than unarmed his hevid,  
And none armur on him he levid,  
Helm, shelde, and als his brand,  
That he bar naked in his hand,

1920

1930



Al he gaf to fir Ywayne,  
And hame with him he went ogaine.  
In the kastel made thai joy ilkane,  
When thai wist the eril was tane,  
And when thai saw tham cumand ner,  
Ogayns him went thai al in fere, 1940  
And when the lady gan tham mete,  
Sir Ywaine gudely gan hir grete :  
He said, Madame, have thi presoun,  
And hald him her in thi baundoun,  
Bot he gert hir grante him grace  
To mak amendes yn that space.  
On a buke the erl swar  
Forto restor bath les and mar,  
And big ogayn bath tour and toune,  
That by him war casten doune, 1950  
And evermar to be hir frende,  
Umage made he to that hende ;  
To this forward he borows fand,  
The best lordes of al that land.

Sir Ywaine wald no lenger lend,  
Bôt redies him fast forto wend,  
At the lady his leve he takes,  
Grete murnyng tharfore sho makes :

Sho said, Sir, if it be yowre will,  
I pray yow for to dwel her still, 1960  
And i wil yelde into yowr handes  
Myne awyn body, and al my landes,  
Herof fast sho hym byfoght,  
Bot al hir speche avayles noght.  
He said, I wil no thing to mede,  
Bot myne armurs, and my stede.  
Sho said, Bath stedes and other thing  
Es yowres at yowr owyn likyng ;  
And if ye wald her with us dwell  
Mekyl mirth war us omell. 1970

It was na bote to bid him bide,  
He toke his stede, and on gau stride,  
The lady and hyr maydens gent  
Wepid far when that he went.

Now rides Ywayn, als ye sal her,  
With hevy herte and dreri'cher,  
Thurgh a forest, by a sty,  
And thar he herd a hydose cry,  
The gaynest way ful sone he tase,  
Til he come whare the noys was, 1980  
Than was he war of a dragoun,  
Had asayled a wilde lyown,

With his tayl he drogh him fast,  
And fir ever on him he cast,  
The lyoun had over litel myght  
Ogaynes the dragon forto fyght ;  
Than fir Ywayn made him bown  
For to fucor the lyoun,  
His shelde bifor his face he fest,  
For the fyr that the dragon kest, 1990  
He strake the dragon in at the chavyl,  
That it come out at the navyl ;  
Sunder strake he the throte boll,  
That fra the body went the choll ;  
By the lioun tail the hevid hang yit,  
For tharby had he tane his bit ;  
The tail fir Ywayne strake in twa,  
The dragon hevid than fel thar-fra.  
He thoght, if the lyoun me asayle,  
Redy fal he have batayle ; 2000  
Bot the lyoun wald noght fyght,  
Grete fawnyng made he to the knyght,  
Down on the grund he fet him oft,  
His forther fete he held oloft,  
And thanked the knyght als he kowth,  
Al if he myght noght speke with mowth :

So wele the lyon of him lete,  
Ful law he lay and likked his fete.  
When fyr Ywayne that fight gan se,  
Of the beste him thocht petè ; 2010  
And on his wai forth gan he ride,  
The lyown folowd by hys fyde ;  
In the forest al that day,  
The lyoun mekely foloud ay,  
And never, for wele ne for wa,  
Wald he part fir Ywayn fra.  
Thus in the forest als thai war,  
The lyoun hungerd fwith far,  
Of a beste favore he hade,  
Until hys lord sembland he made, 2020  
That he wald go to get his pray,  
His kind it wald, the soth to say ;  
For his lorde fold him noght greve,  
He wald noght go withowten leve.  
Fra his lord the way he laght,  
The mountance of ane arow draght,  
Sone he met a barayn da,  
And ful sone he gan hir fla,  
Hir throte in twa ful sone he bate,  
And drank the blode whils it was hate, 2030

That da he keft than in his nek,  
Als it war a mele-fek,  
Unto his lorde than he it bar,  
And fir Ywayn perfayved thar  
That it was fo ner the nyght  
That no ferrer ride he might ;  
A loge of bowes fone he made,  
And flynt and fir-yren bath he hade,  
And fir ful fone thar he flogh,  
Of dry mōs and many a bogh  
The lioun has the da undone ;  
Sir Ywayne made a spit ful fone,  
And rofted fum to thaire foper ;  
The lyon lay, als ye fal here ;  
Unto na mete he him drogh,  
Until his maifter had eten ynogh.  
Him failed thare bath falt and brede,  
And fo him did whyte wine and rede,  
Bot of fwilk thing als thai had  
He and his lyon made tham glad.  
The lyon hungerd for the nanes,  
Ful faft he ete raw flefs and banes.  
Sir Ywayn, in that ilk telde,  
Laid his hevid opon his shelde,

2040

2050

Alnyght the lyon about yede,  
To kepe his mayster and his stede :  
Thus the lyon and the knyght  
Lended thar a fourtenyght.

On a day, so it byfell,  
Syr Ywayne come unto the well, 2060  
He saw the chapel and the thorne,  
And said allas that he was born ;  
And when he loked on the stane  
He fel in fwowing sone onane,  
Als he fel his swerde out-shoke,  
The pomel into the erth toke,  
The poynt toke until his throte,  
Wel ner he made a fari note,  
Thorgh his armurs sone it smate,  
A litel intil hys hals it bate : 2070  
And wen the lyon saw his blude,  
He brayded als he had bene wode,  
Than keft he up so lathly rerde,  
Ful mani folk myht he have ferde ;  
He wend wele, so god me rede,  
That his mayster had bene ded.  
It was ful grete peté to her  
What forow he made on his maner.

He stirt ful hertly, i yow hete,  
And toke the fwerde bytwix his fete, 2080  
Up he fet it by a flane,  
And thar he wald himself have flane,  
And so he had sone, for fertayne,  
Bot right in that rase fyr Ywayne,  
And alfone als he saw him stand  
For fayn he liked fote and hand.  
Sir Ywayn said oft-fithes, Allas !  
Of alkins men hard es my grace,  
Mi leman fet me fertayn day  
And i it brak, so wayloway ! 2090  
Allas for dole ! how may i dwell  
To se this chapel and this well !  
Hir fair thorn, hir riche flane !  
My gude dayes er now al gane,  
My joy es done now al bidene,  
I am noght worthi to be fene ;  
I saw this wild beste was ful bayn  
For my luf himselfe have slayne,  
Than sold i fertes, by mor right  
Sla my self for swilk a wyght 2100  
That i have for my folly lorn ;  
Allas the while that i was born !



Als fir Ywayn made his mane,  
In the chapel ay was ane,  
And herd his murning haly all  
Thorgh a crevice of the wall,  
And sone it said, with simepel cher,  
What ertou, that murnes her ?  
A man, he sayd, fum tyme i was ;  
What ertow ? tel me or i pas. 2110  
I am, it sayd, the sariest wight  
That ever lised by day or nyght.  
Nay, he said, by faynt Martyne,  
Thar es na forow mete to myne,  
Ne no wight so wil of wane,  
I was a man now am i nane.  
Whilom i was a nobil knyght,  
And a man of mekyl myght,  
I had knyghtes of my menyè,  
And of reches grete plentè, 2120  
I had a ful fayre feignory,  
And al i lost for my foly ;  
Mi maste forow als sal thou her,  
I lost a lady that was me der.  
The tother sayd, Allas ! allas !  
Myne es a wele farier case ;

To-morn i mun ber jewyfe,

Als my famen wil devise.

Allas ! he said, what es the skill ?

“ That sal thou her, fir, if thou will ; 2130

I was a mayden, mekil of pride,

With a lady her ner bifide,

Men me bikalles of trefown,

And has me put her in presown,

I have no man to defend me,

Tharfore to morn brent mun i be.”

He sayd, What if thou get a knyght,

That for the with thi fafe wil fight ?

Syr, sho sayd, als mot i ga,

In this land er bot knyghtes twa, 2140

That me wald help to cover of car,

The tane es went i wate noght whar,

The tother es dweland with the king,

And wate noght of my myslykyng.

The tane of tham hat fyr Gawayn,

And the tother hat fyr Ywayn,

For hym sal i be done to dede,

To-morn right in this fame stede,

He es the kinges son Uriene.

Perfay, he sayd, i have him sene ; 2150

I am he, and for my gilt  
Sal thou never more be spilt;  
Thou ert Lunet, if i can rede,  
That helpyd me yn mekyl drede;  
I had bene ded had thou noght bene,  
Tharfor tel me us bytwene  
How bical thai the of trefon,  
Thus forto fla, and for what refon.

“ Sir, thai say, that my lady

Lufed me moſte ſpécially,

2160

And wrought al efter my rede,

Tharfor thai hate me to the ded.

The ſteward ſays, that done have i

Grete trefone unto my lady,

His twa brether ſayd it als,

And i wiſt that thai ſaid fals,

And ſone i answerd, als a fot,

(For ſole bolt,es ſone ſhot)

I ſaid, that i ſold find a knyght

That ſold me mayntene in my right,

2170

And ſeght with thaim al thre,

Thus the batayl wajed we.

Than thai granted me als tyte

Fourty dayes unto reſpite,

And at the kynges court i was,  
I fand na cumfort, ne na solase,  
Nowther of knyght, knave, ne fwayn.”  
Than, said he, Whar was syr Gawayn?  
He has bene ever trew and lele,  
He fayled never no damysele. 2180  
Scho said, In court [he] was noght fene,  
For a knyght led oway the quene,  
The kyng tharfor es fwith grym,  
Sir Gawayn folowd efter him ;  
He coms noght hame for fertayne  
Until he bryng the quene ogayne.  
Now has thou herd, so god me rede,  
Why i sal be done to ded.  
He said, Als i am a trew knyght,  
I sal be redy forto fyght 2190  
To-morn with tham al thre,  
Leman, for the luf of the.  
At my might i sal noght fayl,  
Bow how so bese of the batayle,  
If ani man my name the frayne,  
On al maner luke thou yt layne,  
Unto na man my name thou fay.  
Syr, sho sayd, for soth nay,

I prai to grete god alweldand,  
That thai have noght the hegher hand, 2200  
Sen that ye wil my murnyng mend,  
I tak the grace that god wil fend.  
Syr Ywayn sayd, I fal the hyght  
To mend thi murnyng at my myght,  
Thorgh grace of god in trenyte,  
I fal the wreke of tham al thre :  
Than rade he forth into frith,  
And hys lyoun went hym with.  
Had he redyn bot a stownde  
A ful fayr castell he fownde, 2210  
And syr Ywayne, the soth to say,  
Unto the castel toke the way ;  
When he come at the castel-yate,  
Four porters he fand tharate,  
The draw-bryg sone lete thai down,  
Bot al thai fled for the lyoun :  
Thai said, Syr, wythowten dowl,  
'That beste byhoves the leve tharout.  
He sayd, Sirs, so have i wyn,  
Mi lyoun and i fal noght twyn ; 2220  
I luf him als wele, i yow hete,  
Als my self at ane mete,

Owther fal we samyn lende,  
Or els wil we hethin wende.  
Bot right with that the lord he met,  
And ful gladly he him gret,  
With knyghtes and swiers grete plentè,  
And fair ladies and maydens fre;  
Ful mekyl joy of him thai made,  
Bot forow in thair hertes thai hade; 2230  
Unto a chameber was he led,  
And unarmed, and sethin cled  
In clothes that war gay and der;  
Bot oft-tymes changed thair cher,  
Sum tyme he saw thai weped all,  
Als thai wald to water fall;  
Thai made slike murnyng and slik mane,  
That gretter saw he never nane.  
Thai feynyd tham oft for hys sake  
Fayre semblant forto make. 2240  
Ful grete wonder sir Ywayn hade,  
For thai swilk joy and forow made.  
Sir, he said, if yowr wil war,  
I wald wyt why ye mak slike kar.  
This joy, he said, that we mak now,  
Sir, es al for we have yow,

And, sir, also we mak this forow  
For dedys that fal be done to-morow.

A geant wons her ner byfyde,

That es a devil of mekil pryde,

His name hat Harpyns of mowntain,

For him we lyf in mekil payn,

My landes haves he robbed and rest,

Noght bot this kastel es me left,

And, by god that in hevyn wons,

Syr, i had sex knyghtes to sons,

I saw my self the twa slogh he,

To-morn the four als slane mun be.

He has al in hys presowne,

And, sir, for nane other enchesowne,

2260

Bot for i warned hym to wyve

My doghter, fayrest fode olyve,

Tharfor es he wonder wrath,

In depely has he sworn hys ath,

With maystry that he sal hir wyn,

And that the laddes of his kychyn,

And also that his werst fote-knave,

His wil of that woman sal have,

Bot i to-morn might find a knight,

That durst with hymselfen fyght,

2270



And i have none to him at ga,  
What wonder es if me be wa?  
Syr Ywayn lystend him ful wele,  
And, when he had talde ilka dele,  
Syr, he sayd, methink mervayl  
That ye foght never no kounsayl,  
At the kynges hous her byfyde;  
For, fertes, in al this werld fo wyde  
Es no man of so mekil myght  
Geant, champioun, ne knight, 2280  
That he ne has knyghtes of his menyè,  
That ful glad and blyth wald be  
For to mete with swilk a man,  
That thai myght kith thair myghtes on.  
He said, Syr, so god me mend,  
Unto the kynges kourt i fend,  
To feke my mayster syr Gawayn,  
For he wald focor me ful fain,  
He wald noght leve for luf ne drede,  
Had he wist now of my nede, 2290  
For his sister es my wyfe,  
And he lufes hyr als his lyfe.  
Bot a knyght this other day,  
Thai talde, has led the quene oway,

Forto feke hyr went fir Gawayn,  
And yit ne come he noght ogayn.  
Than fyr Ywayne fighed far,  
And said unto the knyght right thar,  
Syr, he sayd, for Gawayn fake,  
This batayl wil i undertake, 2300  
Forto fyght with the geant,  
And that opon swilk a covenant,  
Yif he cum at swilk a time,  
So that we may fight by prime ;  
No langer may i tent tharto,  
For other thing i have to do,  
I have a dede that most be done  
To morn nedes byfor the none.  
The knyght, far sighand, sayd him till,  
Sir, god yelde the thi gode wyll ; 2310  
And al that war thar in the hall,  
On knese byfor hym gan thai fall ;  
Forth thar come a byrd ful bryght,  
The fairest man might se in fight,  
Hir moder come with hir in ser,  
And both thai morned and made yll cher ;  
The knight said, Lo, verraiment,  
God has us gude focur sent ;

This knight, that of his grace wil grant  
Forto fyght with the geant. 2320

On knefe thai fel doun to his fete,  
And thanked him with wordes fwete.

A, god forbede, said fir Ywain,

That the fister of fir Gawajyn,

Or any other of his blode born,

Sold on this wise knel me byforn.

He toke tham up tyte both in fer,

And prayd tham to aménd thair cher:

“ And praies fast to god alswa,

That i may venge yow on yowr fa, 2330

And that he cum swilk tyme of day,

That i by tyme may wend my way,

For to do another dede,

For fertes theder most i nede ;

Sertes i wald noght tham byfwike,

Forto win this kinges rike.”

His thought was on that damysel

That he left in the chapel.

Thai said, he es of grete renowne,

For with him dwels the lyoun ; 2340

Ful wele confort war thai all,

Bath in bour and als in hall ;

Ful glad war thai of thair gest,  
And when tyme was at go to rest,  
The lady broght him to his bed,  
And for the lyoun sho was adred,  
Na man durst necht his chamber ner,  
Fro thai war broght thar-yn in fer.  
Sone at morn, when it was day,  
The lady and the fayr may 2350  
Til Ywayn chamber went thai sone,  
And the dor thai have undone.

Sir Ywayn to the kyrk yede,  
Or he did any other dede;  
He herd the servise of the day,  
And fethin to the knyght gan fay:  
Sir, he said, now most i wend,  
Lenger her dar i noght lende,  
Til other place byhoves me far.  
Than had the knyght ful mekel car. 2360  
He said, Syr, dwells a litel thraw,  
For lus of Gawayn that ye know,  
Socor us now or ye wende,  
I sal yow gif, with-owten ende,  
Half my land, with tonn and tour,  
And ye wil help us in this flour.

Sir Ywayn said, Nai, god forbede,

That i fold tak any mede.

Than was grete dole, so god me glade,

To se the sorow that thai made,

2370

Of tham fir Ywayn had grete petè,

Him thocht his hert myght breke in thre ;

For in grete dede ay gan he dwell,

For the mayden in the chapell,

For fertes if sho war done to ded,

Of him war than none other rede,

Bot oither he fold hym-felven fla,

Or wode ogain to the wod ga.

Ryght with that thar come a grome,

And said tham that geant come ;

2380

Yowr sons bringes he him byforn,

Wel ner naked als thai war born.

With wreched ragges war thai kled,

And fast bunden thus er thai led.

The geant was bath large and lang,

And bar a levor of yren ful strang,

Tharwith he bet tham bitterly,

Grete rewth it was to her tham cry,

Thai had no thing tham forto hyde.

A dwergh yode on the tother fyde ;

2390

He bar a scowrge with cordes ten,  
Thar-with he bet tha gentil men,  
Ever onane, als he war wode,  
Efter ilka band braft out the blode;  
And, when thai at the walles were,  
He cried loud that men myght her:  
If thou wil have thi fons in hele,  
Deliver me that danyfele,

I fal hir gif to warisowne

Ane of the foulest quisteroun

2400

That ever yit ete any brede,  
He fal have hir mayden-hede,  
Thar fal none other lig hir by  
Bot naked herlotes and lowfy.

When the lord thir wordes herd,  
Als he war wode for wa he ferd.

Sir Ywayn than, that was curtays,

Unto the knyght ful sone he fais,

This geant es ful fers and fell,

And of his wordes ful kruell,

2410

I fal deliver hir of his aw,

Or els be ded within a thraw;

For fertes it war a misaventur

That so gentil a creature

Sold ever so foul hap byfall,  
To be defouled with a thrall.  
Sone was he armed, fir Ywayn,  
Tharfor the ladies war ful fayn;  
Thai helped to lace him in his wede,  
And sone he lepe up on his stede; 2420  
Thai prai to god that grace him grant,  
For to sla that foul geant;  
The draw-brigges war laten down,  
And forth he rides with his lioun.  
Ful mani fari murnand man  
Left he in the kastel than,  
That, on thair knese, to god of might,  
Praied ful hertly for the knyght.

Syr Ywayn rade into the playne,  
And the geant come hym ogayne, 2430  
His levore was ful grete and lang,  
And himself ful mekyl and strang.  
He said, What devil made the so balde  
Forto cum heder out of thi halde?  
Who so ever the heder fend  
Lufed the litel, so god me mend,  
Of the he wald be wroken fayn.  
Do forth thi best, said sir Ywayn.



Al the armure he was yn  
Was noght bot of a bul-skyn. 2440  
Sir Ywayn was to him ful prest,  
He strake to him in middes the brest,  
The sper was both stif and gode,  
Whar it toke bit out-braft the blode ;  
So fast sir Ywayn on yt foght  
The bul-scyn availed noght.  
The geant stombild with the dynt,  
And unto sir Ywayn he mynt,  
And on the shelde he hit ful fast,  
It was mervayl that it myght last ; 2450  
The levor bended thar-with-all,  
With grete force he lete it fall.  
The geant was so strong and wight  
That never for no dint of knyght,  
Ne for batayl that he fold make,  
Wald he none other wapyn take.  
Sir Ywain left his sper of hand,  
And strake about him with his brand,  
And the geant, mekil of mayn,  
Strake ful fast to him ogayn, 2460  
Til at the last within a throw  
He rest him on his fadel-bow,

And that percayved his lioun,  
That his hevid so hanged down,  
He hopid that hys lord was hyrt,  
And to the geant fone he styrt,  
The scyn and fles bath rafe he down,  
Fro his hals to hys cropoun ;  
His ribbes myght men se onane,  
For al was bar unto bane. 2470

At the lyown oft he mynt,  
Bot ever he lepis fro his dynt,  
So that no strake on him lyght.  
By than was Ywain cumen to myght.

Than wil he wreke him if he may :  
The geant gaf he ful gude pay,  
He smate oway al his left cheke,  
His sholder als of gan he kleke,  
That both his levor and his hand  
Fel doun law open the land, 2480

Sethin with a stoke to him he stert,  
And smate the geant unto the hert ;  
Than was nane other tale to tell,  
Bot fast unto the erth he fell,  
Als it had bene a hevy tre.  
Than myght men in the kastel se

Ful mekil mirth on ilka fide,  
The yates kest thai opyn wyde;  
The lord unto fyr Ywaine ran,  
Him foloud many a joyful man, 2490  
Also the lady ran ful fast,  
And hir doghter was noght the last.  
I may noght tel the joy thai had,  
And the four brether war ful glad,  
For thai war out of bales broght.  
The lord wist it helpid noght  
At pray fir Ywayn forto dwell,  
For tales that he byfor gan tell,  
Bot hertly, with his myght and mayn,  
He praied him forto cum ogayn, 2500  
And dwel with him a litel stage,  
When he had done hys vusfage.  
He said, Sir, that may i noght do,  
Bileves wele, for me bus go.  
Tham was ful wo he wald noght dwell,  
Bot fain thai war that it so fell.

The neghest way than gan he wele,  
Until he come to the chapele,  
Thar he fand a mekil fir,  
And the mayden with lely lire, 2510

n hyr fmok was bunden fast,  
Into the fir forto be kaft.  
Unto himself he fayd in hy,  
And prayed to god al-myghty,  
That he fold, for his mekil myght,  
Save fro shame that fwete wight :  
“ Yf thai be many, and mekil of pryse,  
I fal let for no kouwardise,  
For with me es bath god and right,  
And thai fal help me forto fight, 2520  
And my lyon fal help me,  
Than er we four ogayns tham thre.”

Sir Ywayn rides, and cries then,  
Habides, i bid yow, fals men !  
It femes wele that ye er wode;  
That wil spill this fakles blode,  
Ye fal noght so yf that i may:  
His lyown made hym redy way.  
Naked he saw the mayden stand,  
Behind hir bunden aither hand, 2530  
Than fighed Ywain wonder oft,  
Unnethes might he fyt oloft,  
Thar was no sembland tham bitwene,  
That ever owther had other sene.

Al about hyr myght men fe  
Ful mykel sorow and grete petè,  
Of other ladies that thar were,  
Wepeand with ful fory cher.  
Lord, thai sayd, what es our gylt ?  
Our joy, our confort, fal be spilt ; 2540  
Who fal now our erandes say ?  
Allas, who fal now for us pray ?  
Whils thai thus karped was Lunet  
On knese byfor the prest fet,  
Of hir syns hir forto schrive,  
And unto hir he went bylive,  
Hir hand he toke and up sho raise :  
Leman, he sayd, whor er thi fase ?  
“ Sir, lo tham yonder, in yone stede,  
Bideand until i be ded ; 2550  
Thai have demed me with wrang,  
Wel ner had ye dwelt over lang ;  
I pray to god he do yow mede,  
That ye wald help me in this nede.”  
Thir wordes herd than the steward,  
He hies him unto hir ful hard,  
He said, Thou lies, fals woman,  
For thi trefon ertow tane :—

Sho has bitraied hir lady,  
And, fir, so wil sho the in hy ; 2560  
And, tharfor, fyr, by goddes dome,  
I rede thou wend right als thou com ;  
Thou takes a ful febil rede  
If thou for hir wil suffer ded.  
Unto the steward than said he,  
Whofo es ferd i rede he fle ;  
And, fertes, i have bene this day  
Whar i had ful large pay ;  
And yit, he fayd, i fal noght fail :  
To tham he waged the batayl. 2570  
Do away thi lioun, said the steward,  
For that es noght our forward ;  
Allane fal thou fight with us thre.  
And unto him thus answerd he :  
Of my lioun no help i crave,  
I ne have none other fote-knave,  
If he wil do yow any dere  
I rede wele that ye ycw wer.  
The steward said, On alkins wife,  
Thi lyoun, fir, thou most chastise, 2580  
That he do her no harm this day,  
Or els wend forth on thi way ;

For hir warand mai thou noght be,

Bot thou allane fight with us thre.

Al thir men wote, and so wote i,

That sho bitrayed hir lady,

Als trayturs fal sho have hyr,

Sho be brent her in this fir.

Sir Ywayn sa[i]d, Nai, god forbede!

(He wist wele how the soth yede)

2590

I trow to wreke hir with the best.

He bad his lyoun go to rest,

And he laid him sone onane

Doun byfor tham everilk ane,

Bitwene his legges he layd his tail,

And so biheld to the batayl.

Al thre thai ride to sir Ywayn,

And smertly rides he tham ogayn,

In that time nothing tint he,

For his an strake was worth thaires thre;

2600

He strake the steward on the shelde,

That he fel down flat in the felde,

Bot op he rase yit at the last,

And to sir Ywayn strake ful fast;

Tharat the lyoun greved fare,

No lenger wald he than lig thar,



To help his mayster he went onane;  
And the ladies everilk ane,  
That war thar forto fe that fight,  
Praied ful fast ay for the knight. 2610

The lyoun hasted him ful hard,  
And sone he come to the steward,  
A ful fel mynt to him he made,  
He bigan at the shulder-blade,  
And with his pawm al rafe he downe,  
Bath hauberk and his actoune,  
And al the flesch down til his kne,  
So that men myght his guttes se;  
To ground he fell, so alto rent,  
Was thar noman that him ment. 2620

Thus the lioun gan hym fla :  
Than war thai bot twa and twa ;  
And, sertanly, thare fir Ywayn  
Als with wordes did his main  
For to chastis hys lyowne,  
Bot he ne wald na mor lig down ;  
The liown thocht how so he sayd,  
That with his help he was wele payd.  
Thai smate the lyown on ilka fyd,  
And gaf him many woundes wide. 2630

When that he saw hys lyoun blede  
He ferd for wa als he wald wede,  
And fast he strake than in that flour,  
Might thare none his dintes dour;  
So grevosly than he bygan,  
That doun he bar bath hors and man;  
Thai yald tham sone to fir Ywayn,  
And tharof war the folk ful fayne;  
And sone quit to tham thaire hir,  
For both he kest tham in the fir, 2640  
And said, Wha juges men with wrang,  
The same jugement sal thai sang.  
Thus he helpid the maiden ying,  
And sethin he made the saghtelyng  
Bitwene hyr and the riche lady;  
Than al the folk, ful hastily,  
Proferd tham to his servise,  
To wirship him ever on al wise:  
Nane of tham al wist, bot Lunet,  
That thai with thair lord war met. 2650  
The lady prayed him als the hend,  
That he hame with tham wald wende,  
Forto sojorn thar a stownd,  
Til he wer warist of his wound.

By his far fet he noght a stra,  
Bot for his lioun was him wa.  
Madame, he said, fertes, nay,  
I mai noght dwel; the soth to say.  
Sho said, Sir, fen thou wyl wend,  
Sai us thi name, so god the mend. 2660  
Madame, he said, bi faint Symoun,  
I hat the knight with the lyoun.  
Sho said, We saw yow never or now,  
Ne never herd we speke of yow.  
Tharby, he sayd, ye understand  
I am noght knawen wide in land.  
Sho said, I prai the forto dwell,  
If that thou may, her us omell.  
If sho had wist wele wha it was,  
Sho wald wele lever have laten him pas; 2670  
And tharfor wald he noght be knawen,  
Both for hir ese and for his awyn.  
He said, No lenger dwel i ne may,  
Beleves wele, and haves goday.  
I prai to crist, hevyn kyng,  
Lady, len yow gude lifing,  
And len grace that al yowr anoy  
May turn yow unto mykel joy.

Sho said, God grant that it so be !

Unto himself than thus said he, 2680

Thou ert the lok and kay also

Of al my wele, and al my wo.

Now wendes he forth, and morning mase,

And nane of tham wist what he was,

Bot Lunet, that he bad fold layn,

And so sho did with al hir mayne.

Sho cunvayd him forth on his way ;

He said, Gude leman, i the pray,

That thou tel to no moder son

Who has bene thi champion ; 2690

And als i pray the, swete wight,

Late and arly thou do thi might,

Wi'h speche unto my lady fre,

Forto mak hir frende with me ;

Sen ye er now togeder glade,

Help you that we war frendes made.

Sertes, sir, sho sayd, ful fayn,

Thar-about wil i be bayn ;

And that ye have done me this day

God do yow mede, als he wele may. 2700

Of Lunet thus his leve he tase,

Bot in hert grete sorow he hase.

His lioun feled fo mekill wa  
That he ne myght no ferrer ga;  
Sir Ywayn puld gres in the felde,  
And made a kouche upon his shelde,  
Tharon his lyoun laid he thar,  
And forth he rides, and fighes far:  
On his shelde fo he him led,  
Than was he ful evyl sted.

2710

Forth he rides, by frith and fell,  
Til he come to a fayr castell,  
Thar he cald, and fwith fone  
The porter has the yates undone,  
And to him made he ful gude cher;  
He said, Sir, ye er welcum here.  
Syr Ywayn said, God do the mede,  
For tharof have i mekil nede.

Yn he rade right at the yate,  
Fair folk kepid hym tharate;

2720

Thai toke his shelde and his lyoun,  
And ful softly thai laid it down;  
Sum to stabil led his stede,  
And sum also unlaced his wede.  
Thai talde the lord than of that knyght,  
And fone he and his lady bryght,

And thair fons and doghters all,  
Come ful fair him forto kall;  
Thai war ful fayn he thor was sted,  
To chaumber fone thai have him led; 2730  
His bed was ordand richely,  
And his lioun thai laid him by.  
Him was no mister forto crave,  
Redy he had what he wald have.  
Twa maydens with him thai laft,  
That wele war lered of leche-craft.  
The lordes doghters both thai wore,  
That war left to kepe hym thore;  
Thai heled hym everilka wound,  
And hys lyoun fone made thai fownd. 2740  
I can noght tel how lang he lay,  
When he was helyd he went his way.

Bot, whils he fojorned in that place,  
In that land byfel this cafe:

A litil thethin in a stede  
A grete lord of the land was ded,  
Lifand he had none other ayr  
Bot two doghters that war ful fayr;  
Als fone als he was laid in molde,  
The elder fister fayd sho wolde 2750

Wend to court sone als sho myght,  
Forto get hir som doghty knyght  
Forto win hir al the land,  
And hald it halely in hir hand.

The yonger sister saw sho ne myght  
Have that fell until hir right,  
Bot if that it war by batail,  
To court sho wil at ask cownsayl.

The elder sister sone was yar,  
Unto the court fast gan sho far,  
To sir Gawayn sho made hir mane,  
And he has granted hyr onane :

2760

“ Bot yt bus be so prevely  
That nane wit bot thou and i ;  
If thou of me makes any yelp,  
Lorn has thou al my help.”

Than efter, on the tother day,  
Unto kourt come the tother may,  
And to sir Gawayn sone sho went,  
And talde unto him hir entent ;

2770

Of his help sho him byfoght.  
Sertes, he sayd, that may i noght.  
Than sho wepe and wrang hir handes,  
And right with that come new tithandes,



How a knyght with a lyoun  
Had slane a geant ful feloun.  
The same knight thar talde this tale  
That fyr Ywayn broght fra bale, -  
That had wedded Gawayn sister der,  
Sho and hir fons war thar in fer; 2780  
Thai broght the dwergh, that be ye balde,  
And to sir Gawayn have thai talde,  
How the knyght with the lyowne  
Delivred tham out of presowne,  
And how he, for fyr Gawayn sake,  
Gan that batayl undertake;  
And als how nobilly that he wroght.  
Sir Gawayn said, I know him n[o]ght.  
The yonger mayden than alfone  
Of the king askes this bone : 2790  
To have respite of fourti dais,  
Als it fel to landes lays.  
Sho wist thar was no man of main  
That wald fyght with sir Gawayn,  
Sho thocht to seke, by frith and fell,  
The knyght that sho herd tham of tell.  
Respice was granted of this thing,  
The mayden toke leve at [the] king,

And fethen at al the baronage,  
And forth sho wēnt on hir vayage. 2800  
Day ne nyght wald sho noght spar,  
Thurgh all the land fast gan sho far,  
Thurgh castel, and thurgh ilka toun,  
To seke the knight with the lyown;  
“ He helpes al in word and dede,  
That unto him has any nede.”  
Sho foght him thurgh al that land,  
Bot of hym herd sho na tythand.  
Na man kouth tel hir whar he was,  
Ful grete forow in hert sho has, 2810  
So mikel murning gan sho make,  
That a grete sekenes gan sho take;  
Bot in hir way right wele sho sped,  
At that kastell was sho fied  
Whar fir Ywayn ar had bene  
Helid of his sekenes clene.  
Thar sho was ful wele knawen,  
And als welcum als til hyr awyn;  
With alkyn gamyn thai gan hir glade,  
And mikel joy of hir thai made. 2820  
Unto the lord sho tald hyr case,  
And helping hastily sho hafe;

Stil in lecheing thar sho lay,  
A maiden for hir toke the way,  
Forto feke, yf that sho myght  
In any land her of that knyght;  
And that fame kastel come sho by.  
Whar Ywayn wedded the lavedy,  
And fast sho spird, in ylk fesown,  
Efter the knight with the lioun. 2830  
Thai tald hir how he went tham fra,  
And also how thay saw him sla  
Thre nobil knyghtes, for the nanes,  
That faght with him al at anes.  
Sho said, Pur charite, i yow pray,  
If that ye wate, wil ye me say,  
Whederward that he es went?  
Thai said forsoth thai toke na tent:  
“ Ne her es nane that the can tell,  
Bot if it be a damysell, 2840  
For whas sake he heder come,  
And for hir the batayl he nome:  
We trow wele that sho can the wis,  
Yonder in yone kyrk sho ys;  
Tharfor we rede to hyr thou ga:”  
And hastily than did sho swa.

Aither other ful gudeli gret,  
And sone sho frayned at Lunet,  
If sho kouth ani fertan sayne ;  
And hendly answerd sho ogayne : 2850  
I fal fadel my palfray,  
And wend with the forth on thi way,  
And wis the als wele als i can.  
Ful oft-fithes thanked sho hir than.  
Lunet was ful finertly yar,  
And with the mayden forth gan sho far,  
Als thai went al sho hyr talde,  
How sho was taken and done in halde,  
How wikkedly that sho was wreghed,  
And how that traytyrs on hir leghed, 2860  
And how that sho fold have bene brent,  
Had not god hir focor sent  
Of that knight with the lyoun :  
“ He lesed me out of presoun.”  
Sho broght hir sone into a playn,  
Whar sho parted fra sir Ywayn ;  
Sho said, Na mare can i tel the,  
Bot her parted he fra me ;  
How that he went wate i no mar,  
Bot wounded was he wonder far. 2870

God, that for us sufferd wounde,  
Len us to se him hale and fownde !  
No lenger with the may i dwell,  
Bot cumly Crist, that heried hell,  
Len the grace, that thou may spede  
Of thine erand, als thou has nede.  
Lunet hastily bies hir home,  
And the mayden sone to the kastel come,  
Whar he was helid byfor-hand,  
The lord sone at the yate sho fand, 2880  
With knyghtes and ladies grete cumpani,  
Sho haylsed tham al ful hendely,  
And ful fayr praied sho to tham then,  
If thai couth, thai fold hyr ken,  
Whar sho myght fynd, in tour or toun,  
A kumly knyght with a lyoun.  
Than said the lord, By swete Jhesus,  
Right now parted he fra us ;  
Lo her the steppes of his stede,  
Evyn unto him thai wil the lede. 2890  
Than toke sho leve, and went hir way,  
With sporris sho sparid noght hir palfray ;  
Fast sho hyed with al hyr myght,  
Until sho of him had a fyght,

And of his lyoun that by him ran,  
Wonder joyful was sho than ;  
And with hir force sho hasted so fast  
That sho overtoke him at the last.  
Sho hailfed him with hert ful fayn,  
And he hir hailfed fayre ogayn. 2900  
Sho said, Sir, wide have i yow fought,  
And for myself ne es it noght,  
Bot for a damysel of pryse,  
That halden es both war and wise ;  
Men dose to hir ful grete outrage,  
Thai wald hir reve hyr heritage,  
And in this land now lifes none  
That sho traystes hyr opone,  
Bot anly opon god and the,  
For thou ert of so grete bountè ; 2910  
Thorgh help of the sho hopes wele  
To win hyr right everilka dele.  
Scho fais, no knyght that lifes now  
Mai help hir half so wele als thou :  
Gret word fal gang of thi vassage,  
If that thou win hir heritage ;  
For thoght sho toke slike fekenes far,  
So that sho might travail nomar.

I have yow foght on fydes fer,  
Tharfor yowr answer wald i her, 2920  
Whether ye wil with me wend,  
Or els whar yow likes to lend.  
He said, That knyght that idil lies  
Oft-fithes winnes ful litel pries,  
For-thi mi rede fal sone be tane,  
Gladly with the wil i gane,  
Wheder so thou wil me lede,  
And hertly help the in thi nede ;  
Sen thou haves me so wide foght,  
Sertes fail the fal i noght. 2930

Thus thair wai forth gan thai bald,  
Until a kastel, that was cald  
The castel of the hevy forow,  
Thar wald he bide until the morow,  
Thar to habide him thocht it best,  
For the son drogh fast to rest ;  
Bot al the men that thai with met,  
Grete wonder sone on tham thai fet ;  
And [seyde], Thou wreche unfely man,  
Whi wil thou her thi herber tane ? 2940  
Thou passes noght without despite.  
Sir Ywain answerd tham alstyte,



And said, Forsoth, ye er unhende,  
An unkouth man so forto shende ;  
Ye fold noght fay hym velany,  
Bot if ye wist encheson why.  
Thai answerd than, and said ful sone,  
Thou sal wit or tomorn at none.

Syr Ywayne said, For al yowr saw,  
Unto yon castel wil i draw.

2950

He, and his lyoun, and the may,  
Unto the castel toke the way.  
When the porter of tham had fight,  
Sone he said unto the knight,  
Cumes forth, he said, ye altogeder,  
Ful ille hail er ye cumen heder.

Thus war thai welkumd at the yate,  
And yit thai went al in tharate,

Unto the porter no word thai said,  
A hal thai fand ful gudeli graid ;

2960

And, als fir Ywayne made entrè,  
Fast bifyde him than saw he

A proper place, and fair, i wis,  
Enclosed about with a palis.

He loked in bitwix the trefe,

- And many maidens thar he sese,

Wirkand filk and gold wir,  
Bot thai war al in pover atir,  
Thair clothes war reven on evil arai,  
Ful tenderly al weped thai ; 2970  
Thair face war lene and als unclene,  
And blak smokkes had thai on bidene ;  
Thai had mischeffs ful manifeste,  
Of hunger, of threst, and of calde ;  
And ever onane thai weped all,  
Als thai wald to water fall.  
When Ywaine al this understode,  
Ogayn unto the yates he yode,  
Bot thai war sperred ferli fast,  
With lokkes that ful wele wald last ; 2980  
The porter kepid tham with his main,  
And said, Sir, thou most wend ogain ;  
I wate thou wald out at the yate,  
Bot thou mai noght, by na gate ;  
Thi herber es tane til to-morow,  
And tharfor getes thou mekill forow ;  
Omang thi fawe her sted ertow.  
He said, So have i bene or now,  
And past ful wele, so sal i her ;  
Bot, leve frend, wiltou me ler 2990

Of thise maidens what thai ar,  
That wirkes al this riche ware?  
He said, If thou wil wit trewly,  
Forthermar thou most aspy.  
Tharfore, he said, i fal n[o]ght lett.  
He foght and fand a dern weket,  
He opind it, and in he yede:  
Maidens, he said, god mot yow spede!  
And, als he sufferd woundes far,  
He fend yow covering of yowr car, 3000  
So that ye might mak merier chere.  
Sir, thai said, god gif so wer!  
Yowr forow, he said, unto me say,  
And i fal mend it yf i may.  
Ane of tham answerd ogayne,  
And said, The soth we fal noght layne,  
We fal yow tel or ye ga ferr,  
Why we er here, and what we err.  
Sir, ye fal understand,  
That we er al of Mayden-land, 3010  
Our kyng, upon his jolite,  
Pafsed thurgh many cuntrè,  
Aventures to spir and spy,  
Forto asay his owen body,

His herber her anes gan he ta,  
That was biginyng of our wa,  
For heryn er twa champions,  
Men fais thai er the devil fons,  
Geten of a woman with a ram,  
Ful many man have thai done gram ; 3020  
What knight so herbers her anyght  
With both at ones bihoves him fight,  
So bus the do, by bel and boke :  
Allas, that thou thine yns her toke !  
Our king was wight himself to welde,  
And of fourtene yeres of elde,  
When he was tane with tham to fyght,  
Bot unto tham had he no myght,  
And when he saw him bud be ded,  
Than he kouth no better rede, 3030  
Bot did him haly in thair grace,  
And made tham sureté in that place,  
Forto yeld tham ilka yer,  
So that he fold be hale and fer,  
Threty maidens to trowage,  
And al fold be of hegh parage,  
And the fairest of his land ;  
Herto held he up his hand.

This ilk rent byhoves hym gyf,  
Als lang als the fendes lyf, 3040  
Or til thai be in batayl tane,  
Or els unto thai be al flane,  
Than fal we pas al hethin quite,  
That her suffers al this despite ;  
Bot herof es noght for speke,  
Es none in werld that us mai wreke.  
We wirk her silver, filk and golde,  
Es none richer on this molde,  
And never the better er we kled,  
And in grete hunger er we sted ; 3050  
For al that we wirk in this stede,  
We have noght half our fil of brede,  
For the best that sewes her any styk,  
Takes bot four penys in a wik,  
And that es litel, wha-som tase hede,  
Any of us to kleth and fede.  
Ilkone of us, withouten lefyng,  
Might win ilk wike fourty shilling,  
And yit bot if we travail mar,  
Oft thai bete us wonder far : 3060  
It helpes noght to tel this tale,  
For thar befe never bote of our bale.

Our maste forow, sen we bigan,  
That es, that we se mani a man,  
Doghty dukes, yrels, and barouns,  
Oft-fithes flâne with thir champiowns,  
With tham to-morn bihoves the fight.  
Sir Ywayn said, God, maste of myght,  
Sal strenkith me in ilka dede,  
Ogains tha devils and al thair drede : 3070  
That lord deliver yow of yowr fase.  
Thus takes he leve and forth he gase.  
He pased forth into the hall,  
Thar fand he no man him to call,  
No bewtese wald thai to him bede,  
Bot hastily thai toke his stede,  
And also the maydens palfray,  
War served wele with corn and hay :  
For wele thai hoped that sir Ywayn  
Sold never have had his stede ogayn. 3080  
Thurgh the hal sir Ywain gase,  
Intil ane orcherd playn pafe,  
His maiden with him ledes he,  
He fand a knyght under a tre,  
Opon a clath of gold he lay,  
Byfor him sat a ful fayr may;

A lady fat with tham in fere,  
The mayden red at thai myght her  
A real romance in that place,  
Bot i ne wote of wham it was. 3090  
Sho was bot fiftene yeres alde,  
The knyght was lord of al that halde,  
And that mayden was his ayre,  
Sho was both gracious, gode, and far.  
Sone when thai saw fir Ywayne,  
Smertly rafe thai hym ogayne,  
And by the hand the lord him tafe,  
And unto him grete myrth he mafe.  
He said, Sir, by fwete Jhefus,  
Thou ert ful welcum until us. 3100  
The mayden was bowfom and bayne  
Forto unarme fyr Ywayne,  
Serk and breke bath sho hym broght,  
That ful craftily war wroght,  
Of riche cloth soft als the fylk,  
And tharto white als any mylk.  
Sho broght hym ful riche wedes to wer,  
Hofe and shofe and alkins ger,  
Sho payned hir with al hir myght,  
To serve him and his mayden bright. 3110



Sone thai went unto foper,  
Ful really served thai wer,  
With metes and drinkes of the best,  
And sethin war thai broght to rest.  
In his chaumber by hym lay  
His owin lyoun and his may;  
At morn, when it was dayes lyght.  
Up thai rafe, and sone tham dyght;  
Sir Ywayn and hys damysele  
Went ful sone til a chapele,  
And thar thai herd a mes in haste,  
That was sayd of the haly gaste;  
Efter mes ordand he has  
Forth on his way fast forto pas;  
At the lord hys leve he tase,  
And grete thanking to him he mase.  
The lord said, Tak it to na greve,  
To gang hethin yit getes thou na leve;  
Herin es ane unfely law,  
That has bene used of ald daw,  
And bus be done for frend or fa;  
I fal do com byfor the twa  
Grete serjantes of mekil myght,  
And whether it be wrang or right,

3120

3130

Thou most tak the shelde and sper,  
Ogaynes tham the forto were.  
If thou overcum tham in this stour,  
Than fal thou have al this honour,  
And my doghter in mariage,  
And also al myne heritage. 3140  
Than said, fir Ywayn, Als mot i the,  
Thi doghter fal thou have for me,  
For a king or ane emperour  
May hir wed with grete honour.  
The lord said, Her fal cum na knyght,  
That he ne fal with twa champions fight;  
So fal thou do on al wife,  
For it es knawen custum asfise.  
Sir Ywayne said, Sen i fal so,  
Than es the best that i may do 3150  
To put me baldly in thair hend,  
And tak the grace that god wil fend.  
The champions sone war forth broght,  
Sir Ywain fais, By him me boght,  
Ye seme wele the devils sons,  
For i saw never swilk champions.  
Aither broght unto the place  
A mikel rownd talvace,

And a klub, ful grete and lang,  
Thik fret with mani a thwang ; 3160  
On bodies armyd wele thai war,  
Bot thar hedes bath war bar.  
The lioun breimly on tham blift,  
When he tham saw, ful wele he wist  
That thai fold with his mayster fight,  
He thocht to help him at his myght ;  
With his tayl the erth he dang,  
Forto fyght him thocht ful lang ;  
Of him aparty had thai drede.  
Thai said, Syr knight, thou most nede 3170  
Do thi lioun out of this place,  
For to us makes he grete manace,  
Or yelde the til us als creant.  
He said, That war noght mine avenant.  
Thai said, Than do thi beste oway,  
And als sone fal we samyn play.  
He said, Sirs, if ye be agast,  
Takes the beste and bindes him fast.  
Thai said, He fal be bun or flane,  
For help of him fal thou have nane ; 3180  
Thi self allane fal with us fight,  
For that es custume, and the right.

Than said fir Ywain to tham sone,  
Whar wil ye that the best be done ?

“ In a chamber he sal be loken,  
With gude lokkes ful stifly stoken.”

Sir Ywain led than his lioun

Intil a chamber to presoun ;

Than war bath tha devils ful balde,

When the lioun was in halde.

3190

Sir Ywayn toke his nobil wede,

And dight him yn, for he had nede,

And on his nobil stede he strade,

And baldely to tham bath he rade.

His mayden was ful far adred,

That he was so straitly sted,

And unto god fast gan sho pray,

Forto wyn him wele oway.

Than strake thai on him wonder far,

With thair clubbes that ful strang war,

3200

Opon his shelde so fast thai feld,

That never a pece with other held ;

Wonder it es that any man

Might ber the strakes that he toke than.

Mister haved he of focour,

For he come never in fwilk a flour,

Bot manly evyr with al his mayn,  
And graithly hit he tham ogayn,  
And, als it telles in the boke,  
He gaf the dubbil of that he toke. 3210  
Ful grete forow the lionn has,  
In the chameber whar he was,  
And ever he thocht opon that dede,  
How he was helpid in his nede,  
And he might now do na focowr  
To him that helpid him in that flour;  
Might he out of the chamber breke,  
Sone he walde his maister wreke.  
He herd thair strakes, that war ful sterin,  
And yern he waytes in ilka heryn, 3220  
And al was made ful fast to hald;  
At the last he come to the thriswald,  
The erth thar keft he up ful fone,  
Als fast als four men fold have done,  
If thai had broght bath bill and spade;  
A mekil hole ful fone he made.  
Yn al this [tyme] was sir Ywayn  
Ful straitly parred with mekil payn,  
And drede he had, als him wele aght,  
For nowther of tham na woundes laght; 3230

Kepe tham cowth thai wonder wele,  
That dintes derid tham never a dele,  
It was na wapen that man might welde  
Might get a shever out of thair shelde.  
Tharof cowth Ywayn no rede,  
Sar he doutid to be ded,  
And also his damysel  
Ful mekil murnyng made omell,  
And wele sho wend he fold be flane,  
And, fertes, than war hir focor gane ;      3240  
Bot fast he stichteld in that stowr,  
And hastily him come focowre.

Now es the lioun out-broken,  
His maister fal ful sone be wroken ;  
He rynnys fast with full fell rese,  
Than helpid it noght to prai for pefe,  
He stirt unto that a glotowne,  
And to the erth he brayd him downe ;  
Than was thar nane about that place  
That thai ne war fayn of that fair chace ;      3250  
The maiden had grete joy in hert ;  
Thai said, He fal never rise in quert.  
His felow fraisted with al his mayn,  
To raise him smertly up ogayn,

And, right so als he stowped down,  
Sir Ywain with his brand was boun,  
And strake his nek-bane right in sonder,  
Tharof the folk had mekil wonder,  
His hevid trindeld on the sand,  
Thus had Ywain the hegher hand. 3260

When he had feld that fowl feloun,  
Of his stede he lighted down,  
His lioun on that other lay,  
Now wil he help him if he may,  
The lioun saw his maister cum,  
And to hys part he wald have som ;  
The right sholder oway he rafe,  
Both arm and klob with him he tafe ;  
And so his maister gan he wreke :  
And als he might, yit gan he speke, 3270

And said, Sir knight, for thi gentry,  
I prai the have of me mercy,  
And by scill sal ho mercy have  
What man so mekely wil it crave ;  
And tharfore grantes mercy to me.  
Sir Ywain said, I grant it the,  
If that thou wil thi selven say  
That thou ert overcumen this day.



He said, I grant withowten fail,  
I am overcumen in this batail, 3280  
For pur ataynt and recreant.  
Sir Ywayn said, Now i the grant  
For to do the na mar der,  
And fro my liown i fal the wer,  
I grant the pefe at my powèr.  
Than come the folk ful fair in fer,  
The lord and the lady als,  
Thai toke him fair about the hals.  
Thai faide, Sir, now faltou be  
Lord and fyre in this cuntrè, 3290  
And wed our doghter for fertayn.  
Sir Ywayn answerd than ogayn :  
He said, Sen ye gif me hir now,  
I gif hir evyn ogayn to yow.  
Of me for ever i grant hir quite ;  
Bot, fir, takes it til no despìte,  
For, fertes, whif may i none wed  
Until my nedes be better sped ;  
Bot this thing, fir, i ask of the,  
That al thir prifons may pas fre : 3300  
God has granted me this chance,  
I have made thair delyverance.

The lord answerd than ful tyte,  
And said, I grant the tham al quite ;  
My doghter als i rede thou take,  
Sho es noght worthi to forsake.  
Unto the knyght fir Ywain fais,  
Sir, I sal noght hir mysprays,  
For sho es so curtays and hende,  
That, fra hethin to the werldes ende, 3310  
Es no kyng ne emperour,  
Ne no man of so grete honowr,  
That he ne might wed that bird bright,  
And so wald i if that i myght.  
I wald hir wed with ful gude cher,  
Bot lo i have a mayden her,  
To folow hir now most i nede,  
Wheder so sho wil me lede :  
Tharfor at this time haves goday.  
He said, thou pases noght so oway, 3320  
Sen thou wil noght do als i tell,  
In my prison sal thou dwell.  
He said, If i lay thar al my live  
I sal hir never wed to wive,  
For with this maiden most i wend,  
Until we cum whar sho wil lend.

The lord saw it was na bote  
About that mater mor to mote,  
He gaf him leve oway to far,  
Bot he had lever he had bene thar. 3330

Sir Ywayn takes than forth in fer  
Al the prifons that thar wer,  
Bifor hym fone thai come ilkane,  
Nerhand naked and wobigane,  
Stil he hoved at the yate,  
Til thai war went al forth tharate,  
Twa and twa ay went thai samyn,  
And made omang tham mikel gamyn.  
If god had cumen fra hevyn on hight,  
And on this mold omang tham light. 3340  
Thai had noght made mar joy fertain  
Than thai made to fyr Ywayne.  
Folk of the toun com him biforn,  
And blifed the time that he was born,  
Of his prowes war thai wele payd,  
In this werld es none flike, thai said;  
Thai convayd him out of the toun,  
With ful fair procesfiowne.  
The maidens than thair leve has tane,  
Ful mekil myrth thai made ilkane; 3350

At thair departing prayed thai thus :  
Our lord god, mighty Jhefus,  
He help yow, sir, to have yowr will,  
And shilde yow ever fra alkyns ill.  
Maidens, he said, god mot yow fe,  
And bring yow wele whar ye wald be.  
Thus thair way forth er thai went,  
Na mor unto tham wil we tent.

Sir Ywayn and his fair may  
Al the sevenight traveld thai, 3360  
The maiden knew the way ful wele  
Hame until that ilk castele,  
Whar sho lef the feke may,  
And theder hastily come thai.  
When thai come to the castel yate,  
Sho led sir Ywain yn tharate,  
The mayden was yit feke lyand,  
Bot when thai talde hir this tithand,  
That eumen was hir mesfager,  
And the knyght with hyr in fer, 3370  
Swilk joy tharof sho had in hert,  
Hir thoght that sho was al in quert.  
Sho said, I wate my suster will  
Gif me now that falles me till.

In hir hert sho was ful light,  
Ful hendly hailfed sho the knight.  
A, fir, sho said, god do the mede,  
That thou wald cum in swilk a nede:  
And al that in that kastel wer  
Welkumd him with meri cher. 3380  
I can noght say, so god me glade,  
Half the myrth that thai him made.  
That night he had ful nobil rest,  
With alkins esment of the best.  
Als fone'als the day was sent,  
Thai ordaind tham and forth thai went,  
Until that town fast gan thai ride  
Whar the kyng sojourned that tide,  
And thar the elder fister lay,  
Redy forto kepe hyr day. 3390  
Sho traisted wele on fir Gawayn,  
That no knyght fold cum him ogayn,  
Sho hopid thar was no knyght lifand  
In batail that might with him stand.  
Al a sevenight dayes bidene  
Wald noght fir Gawayn be sene;  
Bot in ane other toun he lay,  
For he wald cum at the day,

Als aventerous into the place,  
So that no man fold se his face. 3400  
The armes he bar war noght his awyn,  
For he wald noght in court be knawyn.  
Syr Ywayn and his damyfell  
In the town toke thaire hostell.  
And thar he held him prevely,  
So that none fold him ascry;  
Had thai dwelt langer by a day,  
Than had sho lorn hir land for ay.  
Sir Ywain rested thar that nyght,  
And on the morn he gan hym dyght, 3410  
On slepe left thai his lyowne,  
And wan tham wightly out of toun;  
It was hir wil, and als hys awyn,  
At cum to court als knyght unknowyn.  
Sone about the prime of day,  
Sir Gawayn, fra thethin thar he lay,  
Hies him fast into the felde,  
Wele armyd with sper and shelde.  
No man knew him, les ne mor,  
Bot sho that he fold fight fore. 3420  
The elder suster to court come,  
Unto the king at ask hir dome,

Sho said, I am cumen with my knyght,  
Al redy to defend my right,  
This day was us fet fefowne,  
And i am her al redy bowne,  
And sen this es the last day,  
Gifes dome and lates us wend our way.  
My syster has al fydes focht,  
Bot wele i wate her cums sho noght, 3430  
For certainly sho findes nane,  
That dar the batail undertane,  
This day for hir forto fyght,  
Forto reve fra me my right,  
Now have i wele wonnen my land,  
Withowten dint of knightes hand ;  
What so my syster ever has mynt,  
Al hir part now tel i tynt,  
Al es myne, to fell and gyf,  
Als a wreche ay fal sho lyf: 3440  
Tharfor, sir king, sen it es swa,  
Gifes your dome, and lat us ga.

The king said, Maiden, think noght lang,  
(Wele he wist sho had the wrang)  
Damyfel, it es the asfyfe,  
Whils fityng es of the justife;



The dome nedes you most habide,  
For per aventur it may bityde,  
Thi sister sal cum al bityme,  
For it es litil pased prime. 3450

When the king had tald this scill,  
Thai saw cum rideand over a hyll,  
The yonger sister and hir knyght,  
The way to town thai toke ful right,  
On Ywain's bed his liown lay,  
And thai had stollen fra him oway.

The elder maiden made il cher,  
When thai to court cumen wer.

The king withdrogh his jugement,  
For wele he trowed in his entent 3460

That the yonger sister had the right,  
And that sho fold cum with sum knyght.  
Himself knew hyr wele inogh.

When he hir saw ful fast he logh,  
Him liked it wele in his hert,  
That he saw hir so in quert.

Into the court sho toke the way,  
And to the king thus gan sho say,  
God, that governs alkin thing,

The save and se, fyr Arthur the kyng, 3470

And al the knyghtes that langes to the,  
And also al thi mery menyè ;  
Unto yowre court, sir, have i broght  
An unkouth knyght that ye know noght ;  
He sais that, sothly, for my fake,  
This batayl wil he undertake,  
And he haves yit in other land  
Ful felle dedes underhand,  
Bot al he leves, god do him mede !

Forto help me in my nede.

3480

Hir elder sister stode hyr by,  
And tyl hyr sayd sho hastily,  
For hys luf that lens us life,  
Gif me my right withouten strife,  
And lat no man tharfor be slayn.  
The elder sister sayd ogayn,  
Thi right es noght for al es myne,  
And i wil have yt mawgre thine ;  
Tharfore if thou preche alday,  
Her sal thou nothing ber oway.  
The yonger mayden to hir says,  
Sister, thou ert ful curtays,  
And gret dole es it forto se  
Slike two knyghtes al[s] thai be

3490

For us fal put tham-self to spill,  
Tharfor now, if it be thi will,  
Of thi gude wil to me thou gif  
Sum thing that i may on lif.  
The elder said, So mot i the,  
Who so es ferd i rede thai fle ; 3500  
Thou getes right noght withowten fail,  
Bot if thou win yt thurgh batail.  
The yonger said, Sen thou wil fwa,  
To the grace of god her i me ta,  
And, lord, als he es maste of myght,  
He send his focor to that knyght,  
That thus in dede of charitè  
This day antres hys lif for me.  
The twa knightes come bifer the king,  
And thar was sone ful grete gedering, 3510  
For ilka man that walk might,  
Hasted sone to fe that syght ;  
Of tham this was a felly case,  
That nowther wist what other wase ;  
Ful grete luf was bitwix tham twa,  
And now er aither other fa ;  
Ne the king kowth tham noght know,  
For thai wald noght thair faces shew,

If owther of tham had other fene,  
Grete luf had bene tham bitwene. 3520  
Now was this a grete felly,  
That trew luf and fo grete envy  
Als bitwix tham twa was than  
Might bath at anes be in a man.  
The knightes, for thafe maidens love,  
Aither til other kast a glove,  
And wele armed with sper and shelde,  
Thai riden both forth to the felde.  
Thai stroke thair stedes that war kene,  
Litel luf was tham bitwene ; 3530  
Ful grevosly bigan that gamyn,  
With stalworth speres strake thai famen,  
And thai had anes togeder spoken,  
Had thar bene no speres broken,  
Bot in that time bitid it swa,  
That aither of tham wald other fla.  
Thai drow fwerdes, and swang about,  
To dele dyntes had thai no dout ;  
Thair sheldes war shiferd, and helms rifen,  
Ful stalworth strakes war thar gifen, 3540  
Bath on bak and brestes thar,  
War bath wounded wonder far,

In many stedes might men ken  
The blode out of thair bodies ren.  
On helmes thai gaf slike strakes kene,  
That the riche stanes albidene,  
And other ger that was ful gude,  
Was over-covered al in blode.  
Thar helmes war evel brusten bath,  
And thai also war wonder wrath ; 3550  
Thair hauberks als war alto torn,  
Both behind and als byforn ;  
Thair sheldes lay sheverd on the ground :  
Thai rested than a litel stound,  
Forto tak thair ande tham till,  
And that was with thair bother will.  
Bot ful lang rested thai noght,  
Til aither of tham on other foght,  
A stronge stowr was tham bitwene,  
Harder had men never sene, 3560  
The king and other that thar war,  
Said that thai saw never ar  
So nobil knightes in no place  
So lang fight bot by goddes grace.  
Barons, knightes, squiers, and knaves,  
Said, It es no man that haves

So mekil trefor ne nobillay  
That might tham quite thair dede this day.  
Thir wordes herd the knyghtes twa,  
It made tham forto be mor thra. 3570

Knichtes went about gude wane,  
To mak the two fisters at ane,  
Bot the elder was so unkinde, -  
In hir thai might no mercy finde,  
And the right that the yonger hafe  
Puttes sho in the kinges grace.  
The king himself and als the quene,  
And other knightes albidene,  
And al that saw that dede that day  
Held al with the yonger may, 3580  
And to the king al thai bifoght,  
Whether the elder wald or noght,  
That he fold evin the landes dele,  
And gif the yonger damysele  
The half, or els sum porciowne,  
That sho mai have to warisowne,  
And part the two knightes in twyn;  
For fertis, thai said, it war grete fyn  
That owther of tham fold other fla,  
For in the world es noght fwilk twa. 3590

When other knightes said thai fold sefe,  
Tham self wald noght asent to pese.

Al that ever saw that batayl

Of thair might had grete mervayl,

Thai saw never under the hevyn

Twa knightes that war copled so evyn.

Of al the folk was none so wise

That wist whether fold have the prise ;

For thai saw never so stalworth flour ;

Ful der boght thai that honowr.

3600

Grete wonder had sir Gawayn

What he was that faght him ogain,

And sir Ywain had grete ferly

Wha stode ogayns him so stifly.

On this wise lasted that fight

Fra midmorn unto mirk night,

And by that time, i trow thai twa

War ful weri and fare alswa ;

Thai had bled so mekil blode

It was grete ferly that thai stode,

3610

So far thai bet on bak and brest,

Until the sun was gon to rest,

For nowther of tham wald other spar,

For mirk night thai than namar,



Tharfor to rest thai both tham yelde,  
Bot, or thai past out of the felde,  
Bitwix tham two might men fe  
Both mekil joy and grete petè.  
By speche might no man Gawain know,  
So was he hafe and spak ful law, 3620  
And mekil was he out of maght,  
For the strakes that he had laght,  
And sir Ywain was ful wery,  
Bot thus he spekes, and fais in hy:  
He said, Syr, sen us failes light,  
I hope it be no lifand wight  
What wil us blame if that we twin,  
For of al stedes i have bene yn  
With no man yit never i met  
That so wele kowth his strakes fet, 3630  
So nobil strakes has thou gifen  
That my sheld es alto reven.  
Sir Gawayn said, Sir, fertanly,  
Thou ert noght so weri als i,  
For if we langer fightand wer  
I trow i might do the no dere,  
Thou ert nothing in my det,  
Of strakes that i on the fet.

Sir Ywain said, in Cristes name,  
Sai me what thou hat at hame. 3640  
He said, Sen thou my name wil her,  
And covaites to wit what it wer,  
My name in this land mani wote,  
I hat Gawayn the king son Lote.  
Than was sir Ywayn for agast,  
His swerde fra him he kast,  
He ferd right als he wald wede,  
And sone he stirt down of his stede,  
He said, her es a fowl mischance,  
For defaut of conifance; 3650  
A sir, he said, had i the sene,  
Than had her no batel bene,  
I had me yolden to the als tite  
Als worthi war for discumfite.  
What man ertou? said sir Gawain.  
Syr, he sayd, I hat Ywayne,  
That lufes the more, by se and sand,  
Than any man that es lifand,  
For mani dedes that thou me did,  
And curtayfi ye have me kyd: 3660  
Tharfor, sir, now in this flour,  
I sal do the this honowr

I grant that thou has me overcumen,  
And by strenkyth in batayl nomen.

Sir Gawayn answerd, als curtays,  
Thou sal noght do, fir, als thou fais;

This honowr sal noght be myne,  
Bot fertes it aw wele at be thine;

I gif it the her, withowten hone,  
And grantes that i am undone.

Sone thai light, so fais the boke,  
And aither other in armes toke,

3670

And kised so, ful fele fithe,  
Than war thai both glad and blithe;

In armes so thai stode togeder,  
Unto the king com ridand theder,

And fast he covait forto her

Of thir knightes what thai wer,

And whi thai made so mekil gamyn

Sen thai had so foghten famyn.

Ful hendli than asked the king

Wha had so sone made saghteling

3680

Bitwix tham thai had bene so wrath,

And aither haved done other scath?

He said, I wend ye wald ful fain

Aither of yow have other slayn,

And now ye er so frendes der.  
Sir king, said Gawain, ye sal her ;  
For unknowing and hard grace,  
Thus have we foghten in this place ; 3690  
I am Gawayn, yowr awin nevow,  
And fir Ywayn faght with me now ;  
When we war ner weri, i wys,  
Mi name he frayned and i his,  
When we war knawin, fone gan we sese :  
Bot, fertes, fir, this es no lese,  
Had we foghten forth a stownde,  
I wote wcle i had gone to grounde,  
By his prowes and his mayne,  
I wate for soth i had bene slayne. 3700  
Thir wordes menged al the mode,  
Of fir Ywain als he stode :  
Sir, he said, so mot i go,  
Ye kn[a]w yowr self it es noght so.  
Sir king, he said, withowten fail,  
I am overcumen in this batayl.  
Nai, fertes, said Gawain, bot am i.  
Thus nowther wald have the maistri.  
Bifor the king gan aither grant  
That himself was recreant ; 3710

Than the king, and hys menyè  
Had bath joy and grete petè,  
He was ful fayn thai frendes wer,  
And that thai war so funden in fer.  
The kyng faid, Now es wele fene  
That mekil luf was yow bitwene.  
He faid, fir Ywain, welkum home,  
For it was lang fen he thar come.  
He faid, I rede ye both asfent  
To do yow in my jument, 3720  
And i fal mak so gude ane ende,  
That ye fal both be halden hende.  
Thai both asfented sone thartill,  
To do tham in the kynges will,  
If the maydens wald do so.  
Than the king bad knyghtes two  
Wend efter the maydens bath,  
And so thai did ful swith rath,  
Bifor the kyng when thai war broght,  
He tald unto tham als him thought : 3730  
“ Lystens me now, maydens hende,  
Yowr grete debate es broght til ende,  
So fer forth now es it dreven  
That the dome most nedes be gifen,

And i fal deme yow als i can.”  
The elder syster answerd than,  
Sen ye er king that us fold wer,  
I pray yow do to me na der.  
He said, I wil let for na saw,  
For to do the landes law. 3740  
Thi yong syster fal have hir right,  
For i fe wele that thi knyght,  
Es overcumen in this wer.  
Thus said he anely hir to fer,  
And for he wist hir wilful wele,  
That sho wald part with never a dele.  
Sir, sho said, sen thus es gan,  
Now most i, whether i wil or nane,  
Al yowr cummandment fulfill,  
And tharfor dose right als ye will. 3750  
The king said, Thus fal it fall,  
Al yowr landes depart i fall :  
Thi wil es wrang, that have i knawin,  
Now fal thou have noght bot thin awin,  
That es the half of al-bydene.  
Than answerd sho, ful tite in tene,  
And said, Me think ful grete outrage  
To gif hir half myne heritage.

The king said, For yowr bother esse,  
In hir land i fal hir sese, 3760  
And sho fal hald hir land of the,  
And to the tharfor mak fewtè,  
Sho fal the luf als hir lady,  
And thou fal kith thi curtayfi,  
Luf hir efter thine avenant,  
And sho fal be to the tenant.  
This land was first, i understand,  
That ever was parted in Ingland.  
Than said the king, Withowten fail,  
For the luf of that batayl, 3770  
Al fisters that sold efter bene  
Sold part the landes tham bitwene.  
Than said the king to fir Gawain,  
And als he prayed fir Ywain,  
Forto unlace thair riche wede,  
And tharto had thai bath grete nede.  
Als thai thus-gate stod and spak,  
The lyown out of the chamber brak,  
Als thai thair armours sold unlace,  
Come he rinand to that place, 3780  
Bot he had, or he come thar,  
Soght his mayster whide-war.



And ful mekil joy he made,  
When he his mayster funden hade.  
On ilka fide than might men se  
The folk fast to toun gan fle,  
So war thai ferd for the liowne,  
When thai saw him theder bown.  
Syr Ywain bad tham cum ogayn,  
And said, Lordinges, for fertayn, 3790  
Fra this bestie i fal yow wer,  
So that he fal do yow no der ;  
And, sirs, ye fal wele trow mi sawes,  
We er frendes and gude felaws ;  
He es mine, and i am his,  
For na trefor i wald him mys.  
When thai saw this was fertain,  
Than spak thai al of sir Ywaine :  
This es the knight with the liown,  
That es halden of so grete renown ; 3800  
This ilk knight the geant slogh,  
Of dedis he es doghty inogh.  
Than said sir Gawayn sone in hi,  
Me es bitid grete velani ;  
I cri the mercy, sir Ywayne,  
That i have trispast the ogayn ;

Thou helped mi fyster in hir nede,  
Evil have i quit the now thi mede;  
Thou anterd thi life for luf of me,  
And als mi fister tald of the ; 3810  
Thou said that we, ful fele dawes,  
Had bene frendes, and gude felawes ;  
Bot wha it was ne wift i noght,  
Sethen have i had ful mekil thought,  
And yit for al that i do can  
I cowth never her of na man  
That me cowth tell, in tour ne toun,  
Of the knight with the liown.  
When thai had unlaced thair wede,  
Al the folk toke ful gode hede 3820  
How that beste, his bales to bete,  
Likked his maister both hend and fete.  
Al the men grete mervail hade  
Of the mirth the lyown made.  
When the knightes war broght to rest,  
The king gert cum sone of the best  
Surgiens that our war fene,  
For to hele tham both bidene.  
Sone so thai war hale and fownd,  
Sir Ywayn hies him fast to found. 3830

Luf was so in his hert fest,  
Night ne day haved he no rest;  
Bot he get grace of his lady,  
He most go wode, or for luf dy.  
Ful preveli forth gan he wende  
Out of the court fra ilka frende;  
He rides right unto the well,  
And thar he thinkes forto dwell;  
His gode lyon went with him ay,  
He wald nocht part fro him oway. 3840  
He kest water upon the stane,  
The storm rase ful sone onane,  
The thoner grisely gan out-brest,  
Him thocht als al the grete forest,  
And al that was about the well,  
Sold have sonken into hell.  
The lady was in mekyl dout,  
For al the kastel walles about  
Quoke so fast that men might think  
That al into the erth fold synk; 3850  
Thai trembled fast, both bour and hall,  
Als thai unto the grund fold fall;  
Was never, in this mydle-erde,  
In no kastell folk so ferde.

Bot wha it was wele wift Lunet,  
Sho said, Now er we hard byfet ;  
Madame, i ne wate what us es best,  
For her now may we have no rest ;  
Ful wele i wate ye have no knight  
That dar wende to yowr wel, and fight. 3860  
With him that cumes yow to afaile ;  
And if he have her no batayle,  
Ne findes none yow to defend,  
Yowr lose ben lorn withouten end.  
The lady said, sho wald be dede :  
“ Der Lunet, what es thi rede ?  
Wirk i wil by thi kounfail,  
For i ne wate noght what mai avail.”  
Madame, sho said, i wald ful fayn  
Kounfail yow if it might gayn, 3870  
Bot in this case it war mystere  
To have a wifer kounfayler :  
And by defait than gan sho say,  
Madame, per chance, this ilk day,  
Sum of yowr knightes mai cum hame,  
And yow defend of al this shame.  
A, sho said, Lunet, lat be !  
Speke na mor of my menyè,

For wele i wate, so god me mend,  
I have na knight me mai defend ; 3880  
Tharfor my kownfail bus the be,  
And i wil wirk al efter the ;  
And tharfor help at al thi myght.  
Madame, sho said, had we that knyght,  
That es so curtais and avenant,  
And has flane the grete geant,  
And als that the thre knightes slogh,  
Of him ye myght be trift inogh ;  
Bot forthermar, madame, i wate  
He and his lady er at debate, 3890  
And has bene so ful many day,  
And als i herd hym-selvyn fay,  
He wald bileve with no lady,  
Bot on this kownand utterly,  
That thai wald mak fertayn ath  
To do thair might and kunyng bath,  
Trewly both by day and naght,  
To mak him and hys lady faght,  
The lady answerd sone hir tyll,  
That wil i do with ful gode will ; 3900  
Unto the her mi trowth i plight,  
That i sal tharto do mi might.

Sho said, Madame, be ye noght wrath,  
I most nedes have of yow an ath,  
So that i mai be fertayn.

The lady said, That will i fayn.

Lunet than riche relikes toke,

The chalis and the mes boke,

On knese the lady down hir set,

Wit ye wele than liked Lunet :

3910

Hir hand upon the boke sho laid,

And Lunet alkyns to hir said :

Madame, sho said, thou salt swer her,

That thou sal do thi power,

Both dai and night, upon al wise,

Withouten alkyns fayntise,

To saghtel the knyght with the liown

And his lady of grete renowne,

So that no faut be funden in the.

Sho said, I grant it sal so be.

3920

Than was Lunet wele paid of this,

The boke sho gert hir lady kys :

Sone a palfray sho bistrade,

And on hir way fast forth sho rade.

The next way ful sone sho nome,

Until sho to the well come.

Sir Ywain sat under the thorn,  
And his lyown lay him byforn :  
Sho knew him wele by his lioun,  
And hastily sho lighted downe ; 3930  
And als sone als he Lunet fagh  
In his hert than list him lagh :  
Mekil mirth was when thai met,  
Aither other ful fair has gret.  
Sho said, I love grete god in trone,  
That i have yow fun so sone,  
And tithandes tel i yow biforn,  
Other sal my lady be manesworn,  
On relikes, and bi bokes brade,  
Or els ye twa er frendes made. 3940  
Sir Ywain than was wonder glad,  
Fer the tithandes that he had,  
He thanked hir ful fele sith,  
That sho wald him slike gudenes kith ;  
And sho him thanked mekill mar,  
For the dedes that war done ar :  
So ather was in other det,  
That both thair travail was wele set.  
He sais, Talde thou hir oght my name ?  
Sho said, Nay, than war i to blame ; 3950



Thi name sho fal noght wit for me,  
Til ye have kyfsed, and saghteld be.

Than rade thai forth toward the town,  
And with tham ran the gude lyoun.  
When thai come to the castel-yate,  
Al went thai in thareat ;

Thai spak na word to na man born,  
Of al the folk thai fand byforn.

Als fone so the lady herd sayn,

Hir damifel was cumen ogayn,

3960

And als the liown and the knight,

Than in hert sho was ful lyght ;

Scho covait ever of al thing

Of him to have knowlageing.

Sir Ywain fone on knese him fet,

When he with the lady met.

Lunet said to the lady fone,

Take up the knight, Madame, have done,

And, als covenant betwix us was,

Makes his pefe fast or he pas.

3970

Than did the ladi him up-rise,

Sir, sho said, opon al wife

I wil me pain in al thing

Forto mak thi saghtelyng

Bitwix the and thi lady bryght.

Medame, said Lunet, that es right,

For nane bot ye has that powere,

Al the soth now fal ye her.

Madame, sho said, es noght at layn,

This es my lord, sir Ywaine ; 3980

Swilk luf god bitwix yow fend,

That may last to yowr lives end.

Than went the lady fer obak,

And lang sho stode or that sho spak ;

Sho said, How es this, damysele ?

I wend thou fold be to me lele,

That makes me whether i wil or noght

Luf tham that me wa has wrought ;

So that me bus be forfworn,

Or luf tham that wald i was lorn ; 3990

Bot, whether it torn to wele or ill,

That i have said i fal fulfill.

Wit ye wele than, sir Ywaine

Of tha wordes was ful fayne.

Madame, he said, i have miswrought,

And that i have ful der boght ;

Grete foly i did, the soth to say,

When that i past my terme-day ;

And fertes wha fo had fo bityd,  
Thai fold have done right als i dyd, 4000  
Bot i fal never, thorgh goddes grace,  
At mi might do mor trispafe;  
And what man fo wil mercy crave,  
By goddes law he fal it have.  
Than sho afented faghteling to mak,  
And sone in arms he gan hir tak,  
And kised hir ful oft fith,  
Was he never ar fo blith.

Now has fir Ywain ending made  
Of al the forows that he hade; 4010  
Ful lely lufed he ever hys whyfe,  
And sho him als hyr owin life;  
That lasted to thair lives ende;  
And trew Lunct, the maiden hende,  
Was honord ever with ald and ying,  
And lifed at hir owin likyng.  
Of alkins thing sho has maystri,  
Next the lord and the lady;  
Al honord hir in tour and toun.  
Thus the knyght with the liown 4020  
Es turned now to fyr Ywayn,  
And has his lordship al ogayn;

And so fir Ywain and his wive  
In joy and blis thai led thair live;  
So did Lunet, and the liown,  
Until that ded haves dreven tham down :  
Of tham na mar have i herd tell,  
Nowther in rumance, ne in spell.  
Bot Jhesu Criste, for his grete grace,  
In hevyn blis grante us a place 4030  
To bide in, if his wills be.  
Amen, amen, *pur charite.*

## LAUNFAL.

BY THOMAS CHESTRE.

*maybe*

## PART I.

**BE** doughty Artours dawes,  
 That held Engelond yn good lawes,  
     Ther fell a wondyr cas,  
 Of a ley that was yfette,  
 That hyght Launval, and hatte yette ;  
     Now herkeneth how hyt was.  
 Doughty Artour fom whyle  
 Sojournede yn Kardeuyle,  
     Wyth joye and greet folas ;  
 And knyghtes that wer profitable,  
 With Artour of the rounde table,  
     Never noon better ther nas.

10

Sere Perfevall, and fyr Gawayn,  
 Syr Gyheryes, and fyr Agrafrayn,

And Launcelot Dulake,  
 Syr Kay, and syr Ewayn,  
 That well couthe fyghte yn plain,  
 Bateles for to take.  
 Kyng Ban-Booght, and kyng Bos,  
 Of ham ther was a greet los, 20  
 Men sawe tho no wher her make ;  
 Syr Galafre, and syr Launfale,  
 Wherof a noble tale  
 Among us schall awake.

With Artour ther was a bacheler,  
 And hadde ybe well many a yer,  
 Launfal for soth he hyght,  
 He gaf gyftys largelyche,  
 Gold, and sylver, and clodes ryche,  
 To squyer and to knyght. — 30  
 For hys largeffe and hys bountè,  
 The kynges stuward made was he,  
 Ten yer, y you plyght ;  
 Of alle the knyghtes of the table rounde  
 So large ther was noon yfounde,  
 Be dayes ne be nyght,

So hyt be fyll, yn the tenthe yer,  
 Marlyn was Artours counsalere,  
 He radde hym for to wende  
 To king Ryon of Irland ryght, 40  
 And fette him ther a lady bryght,  
 Gwennere hys doughtyr hende.  
 So he dede, and home her brought,  
 But fyr Launfal lyked her noght,  
 Ne other knyghtes that wer hende;  
 For the lady bar bos of fwych word,  
 That sche hadde lemannys unther her lord,  
 So fele ther nas noon ende.

They wer ywedded, as y you fay,  
 Up on a Wytsonday, 50  
 Before princes of moch pryde,  
 No man ne may telle yn tale  
 What folk ther was at that bredale,  
 Of countreys fer and wyde.  
 No nother man was yn halle yfette,  
 But he wer prelat, other baronette,  
 In herte ys naght to hyde,  
 Yf they fatte noght alle ylyche,  
 Har fervyse was good and ryche,  
 Certeyn yn ech a fyde. 60



And whan the lordes hadde ete yn the halle,  
And the clothes wer drawnen alle,  
As ye mowe her and lythe,  
The botelers sentyn wyn,  
To alle the lords that wer theryn,  
With chere both glad and blythe.  
The quene yaf gyftes for the nones,  
Gold and selver, precyous stonys,  
Her curtasye to kythe,  
Everych knyght sche yaf broche, other ryng, 70  
But fyr Launfal sche yaf no thyng,  
That grevede hym many a fythe.

And whan the bredale was at ende  
Launfal tok his leve to wende  
At Artour the kyng,  
And seyde a lettere was to hym come,  
That deth hadde hys fadyr ynome,  
He most to his berynge.  
Tho seyde king Artour, that was hende,  
Launfal, if thou wylt fro me wende, 80  
Tak with the greet spendyng,  
And my fuster fones two,  
Bothe they schull with the go,  
At hom the for to bryng.

Launfal tok leve, withoute fable,  
With knyghtes of the rounde table,

And wente forth yn his journè,  
Tyl he come to Karlyown,  
To the meyr's hous of the tounè,

Hys servaunt that hadde ybe. 90

The meyr stod, as ye may here,  
And saw hym come ride up anblere,

With two knyghtes and other maynè,  
Agayns hym he hath wey ynome,  
And seyde, Syr, thou art well come,  
How faryth our kyng? tel me.

Launfal answered and seyde than,

He faryth as well as any man,

And elles greet ruthe hyt wore;

But, fyr meyr, without lesyng, 100

I am the partyth fram the kyng,

And that rewyth me fore:

Ne ther thar noman benethe ne above,

For the kyng Artours love,

Onowre me neuer more;

But, fyr meyr, y pray the pur amour,

May y take with the sojour?

Som tyme we knewe us yore.

The meyr stod, and bethogte hym there,  
What myght be hys answere, 110

And to hym than gan he fayn,  
Syr, seven knyghtes han her bar in ynome,  
And ever y wayte whan they wyl come,  
They arn of Lytyll-Bretayne.

Launfal turnede hymself and lowgh,  
Therof he hadde scorn inowgh,

And seyde to his knyghtes tweyne,  
Now may ye se swych ys service,  
Unther a lord of lytyll pryse,  
How hé may therof be fayn. 120

Launfal awayward gan to ryde,  
The meyr bad he schuld abyde,

And seyde yn thys manere,  
Syr, yn a chamber by my orchard-syde,  
Ther may ye dwell with joye and pryde,

Yf hyt your wyll were.  
Launfal anoon ryghtes,

He and hys two knytes,  
Sojournede ther yn fere,

So savagelych hys good he besette, 130

That he ward yn greet dette,  
Ryght yn the ferst yeie,

So hyt befell at Pentecost,  
Swych tyme as the holy goft  
Among mankend gan lyght,  
That fyr Huwe and fyr Jon  
Tok her leve for to gon  
At fyr Launfal the knyght.  
They seyde, Syr, our robes beth to rent, 140  
And your trefour ys all yspent,  
And we goth ewyll ydyght.  
Thane seyde fyr Launfal to the knyghtes fre,  
Tell ye no man of my povertè,  
For the love of god almyght.

The knyghtes answerede and seyde tho,  
That they nolde him wreye never mo,  
All thys world to wyne.  
With that word they wente hym fro,  
To Glaftyngbery bothe two, 150  
Ther kyng Artour was inne.  
The kyng sawe the knyghtes hende,  
And ayens ham he gan wende,  
For they wer of his kenne;  
Noon other robes they ne hadde  
Than they out with ham ladde,  
And tho wer to-tore and thynne.

Than feyde Gwenore, that was fel,  
How faryth the prowde knyght Launfal ?

May he hys armes welde ?

Ye, madame, fayde the knytes than, 160

He faryth as well as any man,

And ellys god hyt schelde.

Moche worchyp and greet honour,  
To Gonore the quene and kyng Artour,

Of fyr Launfal they telde ;

And feyde, He lovede us so,

That he wold us evermo,

At wyll have yhelde.

But upon a rayny day hyt befel,

An huntynge wente fyr Launfel, 170

To chafy yn holtes hore,

In our old robes we yede that day,

And thus we beth ywent away,

As we before hym wore.

Glad was Artour the kyng,

That Launfal was yn good lykyng,

The quene hyt rew well fore ;

For sche wold, with all her myght,

That he hadde be, bothe day and nyght,

In paynys mor and more.

180



But othyng, damefele, y pray the,  
Sadel and brydel lene thou me,

A whyle for to ryde,  
That y myghte confortede be.  
By a launde unther thys cyte,

Al yn thys undern-tyde. 210

Launfal dygbte hys courser,  
Withoute knave other squyer,

He rood with lytyll pryde ;  
Hys hors stod, and fel yn the fen,  
Wherfore hym scornede many men,  
Abowte hym fer and wyde.

Poverly the knyght to hors gan sprynge,  
For to dryve away lokynge,

He rood toward the west ;  
The wether was hot the undern-tyde,  
He lyghte adoun, and gan abyde, 220

Under a fayr forest :  
And for hete of the wedere,  
Hys mantell he feld togydere,

And sette hym down to reste ;  
Thus sat the knyght yn fymplyte,  
In the schadowe unther a tre,  
Ther that hym lykede best.



As he sat yn forow and fore,  
 He sawe come out of holtes hore 230

Gentyll maydenes two,

Har kerteles wer of Inde fandel,

Ilased smalle, jolyf and well,

Ther myght noon gayer go.

Har manteles wer of grene felwet,

Ybordured with gold, ryght well yfette

Ipelvred with grys and gro ;

Har heddys wer dyght well withalle,

Everych hadde oon a jolyf coronall,

Wyth fyxty gemmys and mo. 240

Har faces wer whyt as snow on downe,

Har rode was red, her eyn wer browne,

I sawe never non fwyche ;

That oon bar of gold a basyn,

That other a towayle whyt and fyn,

Of felk that was good and ryche.

Her kercheves wer well fchyre,

Arayd wyth ryche gold wyre,

Launfal began to fyche ;

They com to hym over the hoth, 250

He was curteys, and ayens hem goth,

And greette hem myldelyche.

Damefels, he seyde, god yow fe!

Syr knyght, they seyde, well the be!

Our lady, dame Tryamour,

Bad thou schuldest com speke with here,

Gyf hyt wer thy wylle fere,

Wythoute more sojour.

Launfal hem grauntede curteyslyche,

And wente wyth hem myldelyche, 260

They wheryn whyt as flour;

And when they come in the forest an hygh,

A pavyloun yteld he sygh,

With merthe and mochell honour.

The pavyloun was wrouth for sothe; y wys,

All of werk of Sarfynys,

The pomelles of crystall;

Upon the toppe an ern ther stod,

Of bournede gold ryche and good,

Iflorysched with ryche amall. 270

Hys cyn wer carbonkeles bryght,

As the mone they schon a-nyght,

That spreteth out ovyr all;

Alyfaundre the conquerour,

Ne kyng Artour, yn hys most honour,

Ne hadde noon scwych juell.

He fond yn the pavyloun  
The kynges doughter of Olyroun,

Dame Tryamour that hyghte,  
Her fadyr was kyng of fayrye, 280  
Of occient fer and nyghe,

A man of mochell myghte.  
In the pavyloun he fond a bed of prys,  
Iheled with purpur bys,

That semylé was of fyghte,  
Therinne lay that lady gent,  
That after fyr Launfal hedde ysent,  
That leffome lemede bryght.

For hete her clothes down fche dede,  
Almeft to her gerdyl ftede, 290

Than lay fche uncovert ;  
Sche was as whyt as lylve yn May,  
Or fnow that fneweth yn wynterys day,

He feygh never non fo pert.  
The rede rofe, whan fche ys newe,  
Ayens her rode nes naught of hewe,

I dar well fay yn fert ;  
Her here fchon as gold wyre,  
May no man rede here alyre,  
Ne naught well thenke yn hert. 300

Sche feyde, Launfal, my lemman swete,

Al my joye for the y lete,

Swetyng paramour,

Ther nys no man yn Cristentè,

That y love so moche as the,

Kyng, neyther emperour.

Launfal beheld that swete wyghth,

All hys love yn her was lyghth,

And keste that swete flour ;

And sat adoun her byfyde,

310

And feyde, Swetyng, what so betyde,

I am to thyn honour.

She feyde, Syr knyght, gentyl and hende,

I wot thy stat, ord, and ende,

Be naught aschamed of me ;

Yf thou wylt truly to me take,

And alle wemen for me forsake,

Ryche i wyll make the.

I wyll the yeve an alner,

Imad of fylk and of gold cler,

320

Wyth fayre ymages thre ;

As oft thou puttest the hond therinne,

A mark of gold thou schalt wyne,

In wat place that thou be.

Also, sche feyde, fyr Launfal,  
 I yeve the Blaunchard my stede lel,  
 And Gyfre my owen knave;  
 And of my armes oo pensel,  
 Wyth thre ermyns ypeynted well,  
 Also thou schalt have. 330

In werre, ne yn turnement,  
 Ne schall the greve no knyghtes dent,  
 So well y schall the save.  
 Than answerede the gantyl knyght,  
 And feyde, Gramarcy, my fwete wyght,  
 No bettere kepte y have.

The damefell gan her up sette,  
 And bad her maydenes her fette  
 To hyr hondys watyr clere;  
 Hyt was ydo without lette, 340  
 The cloth was spred, the bord was sette,  
 They wente to hare soper.  
 Mete and drynk they hadde afyn,  
 Pyement, clare and Reynysch wyn,  
 And elles greet wondyr hyt wer;  
 Whan they had sowpeth, and the day was gon,  
 They wente to bedde, and that anoon,  
 Launfal and sche yn fere.

For play lytyll they fclepte that nyght,  
Tyll on morn hyt was day-lyght, 350

Sche badd hym aryfe anoon ;  
Hy feyde to hym, Syr gantyl knyght,  
And thou wylt fpeke with me in any wyght,  
To a derne ftede thou gon.

Well privyly i woll come to the,  
No man alyve ne fchall me fe,  
As ftylle as any fton.

Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,  
He cowde no man hys joye kythe,  
And kefte her well good won. 360

But of othyng, fyr knyght, i warne the,  
That thou make no boft of me,  
For no kennes mede ;  
And yf thou dooft, y warny the before,  
All my love thou haft forlore :

And thus to hym fche feyde.  
Launfal tok hys leve to wende,  
Gyfre kedde that he was hende,  
And brought Launfal hys ftede ;  
Launfal lepte ynto the arfoun, 370  
And rood hom to Karlyoun,  
In hys pover wede.

Tho was the knyght yn herte at wylle,

In hys chaunber he hyld him styлле,

All that undern-tyde ;

Than come ther thorwgh the cyté ten

Well yharneyfyth men

Upon ten fomers ryde.

Some wyth fylver, some wyth gold,

All to fyr Launfal hyt schold, 380

To presente hym wyth pryde ;

Wyth ryche clothes, and armure bryght,

They axede astyr Launfal the knyght,

Whar he gan abyde.

The yong men wer clodeth yn Ynde,

Gyfre he rood all behynde,

Up Blaunchard whyt as flour ;

Tho seyde a boy, that yn the market stod,

How fer schall all thys good ?

Tell us pur amour. 390

Tho seyde Gyfre, Hyt ys ysent

To fyr Launfal yn present,

That hath leved yn greet dolour.

Than seyde the boy, Nys he but a wrecche ?

What thar any man of hym recche ?

At the meyrys hous he taketh fojour.



At the merys hous they gon alyghte,

And presented the noble knyghte

Wyth swych good as hym was sent ;

And whan the meyr seygh that rycheffe, 400

And fyr Launfales noblenesse,

He held hym self soule yschent.

Tho seyde the meyr, Syr, pur charyte,

In halle to day that thou wylt ete with me,

Yesterday y hadde yment

At the feste we wolde han be yn fame,

And y hadde folas and game,

And erst thou were ywent.

“ Syr meyr, god foryelde the,

Whyles y was yn my povertè, 410

Thou bede me never dyne ;

Now y have more gold and fe,

That myne frendes han sent me,

Than thou and alle dyne.

The meyr for schame away yede,

Launfal yn purpure gan hym schrede,

Ipelvred with whyt ermyne ;

All that Launfal had borwyth before

Gyfre, be taylor and be score,

Yald hyt well and fyne.

Launfal helde ryche festes,  
 Fyfty fedde povere gestes,  
     That in myschef wer;  
 Fyfty boughte stronge stedes,  
 Fyfty yaf ryche wedes,  
     To knyghtes and squyere,  
 Fyfty rewardede relygyons.  
 Fyfty delyverede pryfouns,  
     And made ham quyt and schere;  
 Fyfty clodede gestours, 430  
 To many men he dede honours,  
     In countreys fer and nere.

Alle the lordes of Karlyoun  
 Lette crye a turnement yn the toun,  
     For love of fyr Launfel,  
 And for Blaunchard, hys good stede,  
 To wyte how hym wold spede,  
     That was ymade so well.  
 And whan the day was ycome,  
 That the justes were yn ynome, 440  
     They ryde out also snell,  
 Trompours gon har bemes blowe,  
 The lordes ryden out a-rowe.  
     That were yn that castell.

Ther began the turnement,  
And ech knyght leyd on other good dent,  
Wyth mafes and wyth fwerdes bothe ;  
Me myghte y fe some, therfore  
Stedes ywonne, and some ylore,  
And knyghtes wonther wroghth. 450  
Syth the rounde table was  
A bettere turnement ther nas,  
I dar well fay for sothe,  
Many a lord of Karlyoun  
That day were ybore adoun,  
Certayn withouten othe.

Of Karlyoun the ryche constable  
Rod to Launfal, without fable,  
He nolde no lengere abyde ;  
He smot to Launfal, and he to hym, 460  
Well sterne strokes, and well grym,  
Ther wer in eche a fyde.  
Launfal was of hym yware,  
Out of his sadell he hym bar,  
To grounde that ylke tyde,  
And whan the constable was bore adoun,  
Gyfre lepte ynto the arfoun,  
And away he gan to ryde.

The erl of Chestere therof fegh,  
For wreththe yn herte he was wod negh, 470  
And rood to fyr Launfale,  
And smot hym yn the helm on hegh.  
That the crest adoun flegg,  
Thus seyde the Frensch tale.  
Launfal was mochel of myght,  
Of hys stede he dede hym lyght,  
And bar hym doun yn the dale ;  
Than come ther fyr Launfal abowte  
Of Walffche knyghtes a greet rowte,  
The numbere y not how fale. 480

Than myghte me fe scheldes ryve,  
Speres to-breste and to-dryve,  
Behynde and ek before,  
Thorugh Launfal and hys stedes dent,  
Many a knyght, verement,  
To ground was ibore.  
So the prys of that turnay  
Was delyvered to Lanfau that day,  
Without oth yfware ;  
Launfal rod to Karlyoun. 490  
To the meyrys hous yn the toun,  
And many a lord hym before.

And than the noble knyght Launfal

Helde a feste ryche and ryall,

That leste fourtenyght,

Erles and barouns fale

Semely wer sette yn fale,

And ryaly were adyght.

And every day dame Triamour,

Sche com to fyr Launfal bour,

500

A day when hyt was nyght,

Of all that ever wer ther tho,

Segh he non but they two,

Gyfre and Launfal the knyght.

## LAUNFAL.

## PART II.

A knyght ther was yn Lumbardye,  
 To fyr Launfal hadde he greet envye,  
     Syr Valentyne he hyghte ;  
 He herde speke of fyr Launfal,  
 That that he couth justy well,  
     And was a man of mochel myghte.      510  
 Syr Valentyne was wonther strong,  
 Fyftene feet he was longe,  
     Hym thoghte he brente bryghte  
 But he myghte with Launfal pleye,  
 In the feld betwene ham tweye,  
     To justy, other to fyghte.

Syr Valentyne fat yn hys halle,  
 Hys masfengere he let ycalle,

And seyde he moſte wende  
To fyr Launfal the noble knyght, 520  
That was yholde ſo mychel of myght,  
To Bretayne he wolde hym ſende ;  
And ſey hym, for love of hys leman,  
Yf ſche be any gentyle woman,  
Courteys, fre, other hende,  
That he come with me to juſte,  
To kepe hys harneys from the ruſte,  
And elles hys manhod ſchende.

The meſſengere ys forth ywent,  
To tho hys lordys commaundement, 530  
He hadde wynde at wylle  
Whan he was over the water ycome,  
The way to Launfal he hath ynome,  
And grette hym with wordes ſtylle :  
And ſeyd, Syr, my lord, fyr Valentyne,  
A noble werroure, and queynte of gynne,  
Hath me ſent the tylle ;  
And prayth the, for thy lemmanes ſake,  
Thou ſchuldeſt with hym juſtes take.  
Tho lough Launfal full ſtylle. 540



And feyde, as he was gentyl knyght,  
Thylke day a fourtenyght,

He wold wyth hym play.

He yaf the mesfenger, for that tydyng,  
A noble courser and a ryng,

And a robe of ray.

Launfal tok leve at Tryamour,

That was the bryght berde yn bour,

And kefte that fwete may ;

Thanne seyde that fwete wyght,

550

Dreed the nothyng, fyr gentyl knyght,

Thou schalt hym fle that day.

Launfal nolde nothyng with hym have,

But Blaunchard hys stede, and Gyfre hys knave,

Of all hys fayr maynè ;

He schyppede and hadde wynd well good,

And wente over the salte flod,

Into Lumbardye.

Whan he was over the water ycome,

Ther the justes schulde be nome,

560

In the cyté of Atalye,

Syr Valentyn hadde a greet ost,

And fyr Launfal abatede her boft,

Wyth lytyll cumpanye.

And whan fyr Launfal was ydyght,  
Upon Blaunchard hys stede lyght,  
With helm, and spere, and schelde,  
All that sawe hym yn armes bryght,  
Seyde they sawe never swych a knyght,

That hym with eyen beheld.

570

Tho ryde togydere thes knyghtes two,  
That har schaftes to-broste bo,  
And to-scyverede yn the felde ;

Another cours togedere they rod,  
That fyr Launfal helm of glod,

In tale as hyt ys telde.

Syr Valentyn logh, and hadde good game,  
Hadde Launfal never so moche schame,

Beforhond yn no fyght ;

Gyfre kedde he was good at nede,

580

And lepte upon hys maystrys stede,

No man ne segh with fyght.

And er than thay togedere mette,

Hys lordes helm he on sette,

Fayre and well adyght ;

Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,

And donkede Gyfre many fyde,

For hys dede so mochel of myght.

Syr Valentyne smot Launfal soo,

That hys scheld fel hym fro,

590

Anoon ryght yn that ffounde ;

And Gyfre the scheld up hente,

And broghte hyt hys lord to presente,

Er hyt cam thonne to grounde.

Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,

And rode ayen the thrydde fyde,

As a knyght of mochel mounde ;

Syr Valentyne he smot so there,

That hors and man bothe deed were,

Gronyng wyth grysly wounde.

600

Alle the lordes of Atalye

To syr Launfal hadde greet envye,

That Valentyne was yflawe,

And swore that he schold dye,

Er he wente out of Lumbardye,

And be hongede, and to-drawe.

Syr Launfal brayde out hys fachon,

And as lyght as dew he leyde hem doune,

In a lytyll drawe,

And whan he hadde the lordes fclayn,

610

He went ayen ynto Bretayn,

Wyth folas and wyth plawe.

The tydyng com to Artour the kyng,

Anoon wythout lefyng,

Of fyr Launfales nobleffe,

Anoon a letter to hym fende,

That Launfal schuld to hym wende,

At feynt Jonnys masse.

For kyng Artour wold a feste holde,

Of erles and of barouns bolde,

620

Of lordynges more and leffe ;

Syr Launfal schud be stward of halle,

For to agye hys gestes alle,

For cowthe of largeffe.

Launfal toke leve at Tryamour,

For to wende to kyng Artour,

Hys feste for to agye,

Ther he fond merthe and moch honour,

Ladyes that wer well bryght yn bour,

Of knyghtes greet cumpanye.

630

Fourty dayes leste the feste,

Ryche, ryall, and honeste,

What help hyt for to lye ?

And at the fourty dayes ende,

The lordes toke har leve to wende,

Everych yn hys partye.

And aftyr mete fyr Gaweyn,  
Syr Gyeryes, and Agrafayn,  
And fyr Launfal alfo,  
Wente to daunce upon the grene, 640  
Unther the tour ther lay the quene,  
Wyth fyxty ladyes and mo.  
To lede the daunce Launfale was fet,  
For hys largeffe he was lovede the bet,  
Sertayn of alle tho ;  
The quene lay out and beheld hem alle,  
I fe, fche feyde, daunce large Launfalle,  
To hym than wyll y go.

Of alle the knyghtes that y fe there,  
He ys the fayreste bachelere, 650  
He ne hadde never no wyf;  
Tyde me good, other ylle,  
I wyll go and wyte hys wyll,  
Y love hym as my lyf.  
Sche tok with her a companye,  
The fayrest that fche myghte aspye,  
Syxty ladyes and fyf,  
And went hem doun anoon ryghtes,  
Ham to pley among the knyghtes,  
Well ftylle wythouten ftryf. 660

The quene yede to the formeste ende,  
Betwene Launfal and Gauweyn the hende,

And after her ladyes bryght,  
To daunce they wente alle yn fame,  
To se hem play hyt was fayr game,  
A lady and a knyght.

They hadde menstiales of moch honours,  
Fydelers, fytolyrs, and trompours,

And elles hyt were unryght;  
Ther they playde, for sothe to say, 670  
After mete the somerys day,  
All what hyt was neygh nyght.

And whanne the daunce began to flake,  
The quene gan Launfal to counsell take,

And feyde yn thys manere :  
Sertaynlyche, fyr knyght,  
I have the lovyd wyth all my myght,  
More than thys seven yere.

But that thou lovye me,  
Sertes y dye for love of the, 680  
Launfal, my lemman dere.

Than answerede the gentyll knyght,  
I nell be traytour thay ne nyght,  
Be god, that all may stere.

Sche feyde, Fy on the, thou coward,  
An hongeth worth thou hye and hard,  
That thou ever were ybore,  
That thou lyvest hyt ys pytè,  
Thou lovyft no woman, ne no woman the,  
Thow wer worthy forlore. 690

The knyght was fore afchamed tho,  
To speke ne myghte he forgo,  
And feyde the quene before :  
I have loved a fayryr woman,  
Than thou ever leydest thy ney upon,  
Thys seven yer and more.

Hyr lothlokfte mayde, wythoute wene,  
Myghte bet be a quene  
Than thou in all thy lyve.

Therefore the quene was fwythe wrought, 700  
Sche taketh hyr maydenes, and forth hy goth,  
Into her tour also blyve.

And anon fche ley doun yn hyr bedde,  
For wrethe fyk fche hyr bredde,  
And fwore, fo moſte fche thryve,

Sche wold of Launfal be fo awreke,  
That all the lond ſchuld of hym ſpeke,  
Wythinne the dayes fyfe.



Kyng Artour com fro huntynge,  
Blythe and glad yn all thyng, 710

To hys chamber than wente he,  
Anoone the quene on hym gan crye,  
But y be awreke, y schall dye,

Myn herte wyll breke athre.  
I spak to Launfal yn my game,  
And he besofte me of schame,

My lemman for to be ;  
And of a lemman hys yelp he made,  
That the lodlokest mayde that sche hadde

Myght be a quene above me. 720

Kyng Artour was well worth,  
And be god he swor hys oth,  
That Launfal schuld be sclawe ;  
He wente aftyr doghty knyghtes,  
To brynge Launfal anoon ryghtes,

To be hongeth and to-drawe.  
The knyghtes fofte hym anoon,  
But Launfal was to hys chanber gon,

To han hadde solas and plawe ;  
He fofte hys leef, but sche was lore, 730  
As sche hadde warnede hyin before,

Tho was Launfal unfawe.

He lokede yn hys alner,  
That fond hym spendyng all plener,  
Whan that he hadde nede,  
And ther nas noon, for soth to say,  
And Gyfre was yryde away,

Up[on] Blaunchard hys stede.  
All that he hadde before ywonne,  
Hyt malt as snow ayens the funne, 740  
In romaunce as we rede ;  
Hys armur, that was whyt as flour,  
Hyt becom of blak colour,  
And thus than Launfal feyde :

Alas, he feyde, my creature,  
How schall i from the endure,

Swetyng Tryamour ?  
All my joye i have forlore,  
And the that me ys worst fore,

Thou blysful berde yn bour. 750  
He bet hys body and hys hedde ek,  
And curfede the mouth that he wyth spek,

Wyth care and greet dolour ;  
And, for forow, yn that stounde,  
Anoon he fell afwowe to grounde ;  
Wyth that come knyghtes four,

And bond hym, and ladde hym tho,  
Tho was the knyghte yn doble wo,  
Before Artour the kyng.

Than feyde kyng Artour, 760  
Fyle ataynte traytour!

Why madeft thou fwyche yelpyng?  
That thy lemmannes lodlokeft mayde  
Was fayrer than my wyf, thou feyde,  
That was a fowl lefyng;  
And thou befofteft her befor than,  
That fche fchold be thy lemman,  
That was mysprowd lykyng.

The knyght answerede, with egre mode,  
Before the kyng ther he ftode, 770

The quene on hym gan lye:  
“ Sethe that y ever was yborn.  
I befofte her here befor

Never of no folye.  
But fche feyde y nas no man,  
Ne that me lovede no woman,  
Ne no womannes companye;  
And i answerede her and fayde,  
That my lemmannes lodlekeft mayde  
To be a quene was better wordye. 780

Sertes, lordynges, hyt ys so,

I am a redy for to tho

All that the court wyll loke.

To fay the foth, wythout les,

All togedere how hyt was,

Twelve knyghtes wer dryve to boke.

All they feyde ham betwene,

That knewe the maners of the quene,

And the queste toke ;

The quene bar los of fwych a word, 790

That sche lovede lemmannes wythout her lord,

Har never on hyt forfoke.

Therfor they feyden alle,

Hyт was long on the quene, and not on Launfal,

Therof they gonне hym fkere ;

And yf he myghte hys lemman brynge,

That he made of fwych yelpynge,

Other the maydenes were

Bryghtere than the quene of hewe,

Launfal schuld be holde trewe,

Of that yn all manere ; 800

And yf he myghte not brynge hys lef,

He schud be hongede as a thef,

They feyden all yn fere.

Alle yn fere they made proferynge,  
That Launfal schuld hys lemman brynge :

Hys heed he gan to laye.

Than seyde the quene, wythout lesyng,  
Yyf he bryngeth a fayrer thyng,

Put out my eeyn gray.

810

Whan that wajowr was take on honde,  
Launfal therto two borwes fonde,

Noble knyghtes twayn,

Syr Percevall, and fyr Gawayn,

They wer hys borwes, soth to sayn,

Tyll a certayn day.

The certayn day, i yow plyght,  
Was twelve moneth and fourtenyght,

That he schuld hys lemman brynge ;

Syr Launfal, that noble knyght,

820

Greet forow and care yn hym was lyght,

Hys hondys he gan wrynge.

So greet forowe hym was upan,

Gladlyche hys lyf he wold a forgon,

In care and in marnyng ;

Gladlyche he wold hys hed forgo,

Everych man therfore was wo,

That wyfte of that tydyng.

The certayn day was nyghyng,  
Hys borowes hym broght befor the kyng, 830

The kyng recordede tho,  
And bad hym bryng hys lef yn fyght,  
Syr Launfal feyde that he ne myght,  
Therefore him was well wo.

The kyng commaundede the barouns alle,  
To yeve jugement on Launfal,

And dampny hym to fcllo.  
Than fayde the erl of Cornewayle,  
That was wyth ham at that counceyle,  
We wylyd nacht do fo : 840

Greet fchame hyt wor us alle upon  
For to dampny that gantylman,  
That hath be hende and fre ;  
Therfor, lordynges, doth be my reed,  
Our kyng we wylyth another wey lede,  
Out of lond Launfal schall fle.

And as they stod thus spekyng,  
The barouns fawe come rydyng  
Ten maydenes bryght of ble,  
Ham thoghte they wer so bryght and fchene, 850  
That the lodlokeft, wythout wene,  
Har quene than myghte be.

Tho seyde Gawayn, that corteys knyght,  
Launfal, brodyr, drede the no wyght,

Her cometh thy lemman hende.

Launfal answered, and seyde, Y wys,  
Non of ham my lemman nys,

Gawayn, my lefly frende.

To that castell they wente ryght,

At the gate they gonne alyght,

860

Befor kyng Artour gonne they wende,

And bede hym make a redy hastyly

A fayr chamber for her lady,

That was come of kynges kende.

Ho ys your lady? Artour seyde.

Ye schull y wyte, seyde the mayde,

For sche cometh ryde.

The kyng commaundede, for her sake,

The fayryft chaunber for to take,

In hys palys that tyde.

870

And anon to hys barouns he sente,

For to yeve jugement

Upon that traytour full of pryde;

The barouns answered, anoon ryght,

Have we seyn the madenes bryght,

Whe schull not longe abyde.



A newe tale they gonne tho,  
Some of wele, and some of wo,  
    Har lord the kyng to queme,  
Some dampnede Launfal there, 880  
And some made hym quyt and skere,  
    Har tales wer well breme.  
Tho saw they other ten maydenes bryght,  
Fayryr than the other ten of fyght,  
    As they gone hym deme,  
They ryd upon joly moyles of Spayne,  
Wyth sadell and brydell of Champayne,  
    Har lorayns lyght gonne leme.

They wer yclodeth yn famyt tyré,  
Ech man hadde greet desyre 890  
    To se har clodynge.  
Tho feyde Gaweyn, that curtayse knyght,  
Launfal, her cometh thy fwete wyght,  
    That may thy bote brynge.  
Launfal answered, with drery doght,  
And feyde, Alas, y knowe her noght,  
    Ne non of all the offpryng.  
Forth they wente to that palys,  
And lyghte at the hye deys,  
• Before Artour the kyng. 900

And grette the kyng and quene ek,  
And oo mayde thys wordes spak,  
    To the kyng Artour,  
Thyn halle agrayde and hele the walles,  
Wyth clodes and wyth ryche palles,  
    Ayens my lady Tryamour.  
The kyng answered bedene,  
Well come, ye maydenes schene,  
    Be our lord the favyour.  
He commaundede Launcelot du Lake to brynge hem  
    yn fere, 910  
In the chamber ther bar felawes were,  
    Wyth merthe and moche honour.

Anoon the quene suppose gyle  
That Launfal schulld yn a whyle  
    Be ymade quyt and skere,  
Thorugh hys lemman that was comynge,  
Anon sche seyde to Artour the kyng,  
    Syre, curtays yf [thou] were,  
Or yf thou lovedest thyn honour,  
I schuld be awreke of that traytour, 920  
    That doth me changy there,

To Launfal thou schuldest not spare,  
Thy barouns dryveth the to bysmare.

He ys hem lef and dere.

And as the quene spak to the kyng,  
The barouns seygh come rydyng

A damefele alone,

Upon a whyt comely palfrey,

They saw never non so gay,

Upon the grounde gone.

930

Gentyll, jolyf, as bryd on bowe,

In all manere fayr inowe,

To wonye yn worldly wone,

The lady was bryght as blofme on brere,

Wyth eyen gray, wyth lovelych chere,

Her leyre lyght schoone.

As rose on rys her rode was red,

The her schon upon her hed,

As gold wyre that schynyth bryght;

Sche hadde a croune upon her molde,

940

Of ryche ftones and of golde,

That loffom lemede lyght.

The lady was clad yn purpere palle,  
Wyth gentyll body and myddyll small,  
That femely was of fyght,  
Her mantyll was furreyth with whyt ermyn,  
Ireverfyd jolyf and fyn,  
No rythere be ne myght.

Her fadell was femyly sett,  
The fambus wer grene felvet, 950  
Ipaynted with ymagerye,  
The bordure was of belles,  
Of ryche gold and nothyng elles,  
That any man myghte aspye,  
In the arfouns, before and behynde,  
Were twey stones of Ynde,  
Gay for the maystrye;  
The paytrelle of her palfraye,  
Was worth an erldome, stoute and gay,  
The best yn Lumbardye. 960

A gerfawcon sche bar on her hond,  
A fofte pas her palfray fond,  
That men her schuld beholde;

Thorough Karlyon rood that lady,  
Twey whyte grehoundys ronne hyr by,  
Har colers were of golde.  
And whan Launfal sawe that lady,  
To alle the folk he gon crye an hy,  
Both to yonge and olde,  
Her, he seyde, comyth my lemman swete, 970  
Sche myghte me of my balys bete,  
Yef that lady wolde.

Forth sche wente ynto the halle,  
Ther was the quene and the ladyes alle,  
And also kyng Artour,  
Her maydenes come ayens her ryght,  
To take her styrop whan sche lyght,  
Of the lady dame Tryamour.  
Sche dede of her mantyll on the flet,  
That men schuld her beholde the bet, 980  
Wythoute a more fojour,  
Kyng Artour gan her fayre grete,  
And sche hym agayn, with wordes swete,  
That were of greet valour.

Up stod the quene and ladyes stoute,  
Her sorto beholde all aboute,

How evene sche stod upryght;  
Than wer they wyth her also donne,  
As ys the mone ayen the sonne,

A day whan hyt ys lyght. 990  
Than seyde sche to Artour the kyng,  
Syr, hydyr i com for swych a thyng,

To skere Launfal the knyght,  
That he never, yn no folye,  
Besofte the quene of no drurye,  
By dayes ne be nyght.

Therfor, fyr kyng, good kepe thou myne,  
He bad naght her, but sche bad hym,

Here lemman for to be ;  
And he answerede her and seyde, 1000  
That hys lemmannes lothlokest mayde

Was fayryr than was sche.  
Kyng Artour seyde, wythoute nothe,  
Ech may yfè that ys sothe,

Bryghtere that ye be.  
Wyth that dame Tryamour to the quene geth,  
And blew on her swych a breth,  
That never eft myght sche se.

The lady lep an hyr palfray,  
And bad hem alle have good day, 1010

Sche nolde no lengere abyde ;  
Wyth that com Gyfre all so preft,  
Wyth Launfalys ftede out of the forest,  
And stod Launfal befylde.

The knyght to horfe began to fprynge,  
Anoon wythout any lettynge,  
Wyth hys lemman away to ryde ;  
The lady tok her maydenys achon,  
And wente the way that fche hadde er gon,  
Wyth folas and wyth pryde. 1020

The lady rod dorth Cardevyle,  
Fer ynto a jolyf ile,  
Olyroun that hyghte ;  
Every yer upon a certayn day,  
Me may here Launfales ftede nay,  
And hym fe with fyght.  
Ho that wyll there axfy juftus,  
To kepe hys armes fro the ruftus,  
In turnement other fyght ;  
Dar he never forther gon, 1030  
Ther he may fynde juftes anoon,  
Wyth fyr Launfal the knyght.



Thus Launfal, wythouten fable,  
That noble knyght of the rounde table,

Was take yn to the fayrye;  
Seththe saw hym yn thys lond no man,  
Ne no more of hym telle y ne can,

For sothe, wythiout lye.

Thomas Chestre made thys tale,  
Of the noble knyght syr Launfale,

1040

Good of chyvalrye.

Jhesus, that ys hevene kyng,

Yeve us alle hys blefsyng,

And hys modyr Marye!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

GHISIAIO



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